Monday, August 9, 2010 ★★ 14 sections / Vol. 35 / No. 242 P10

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

RP quakes near undersea volcano

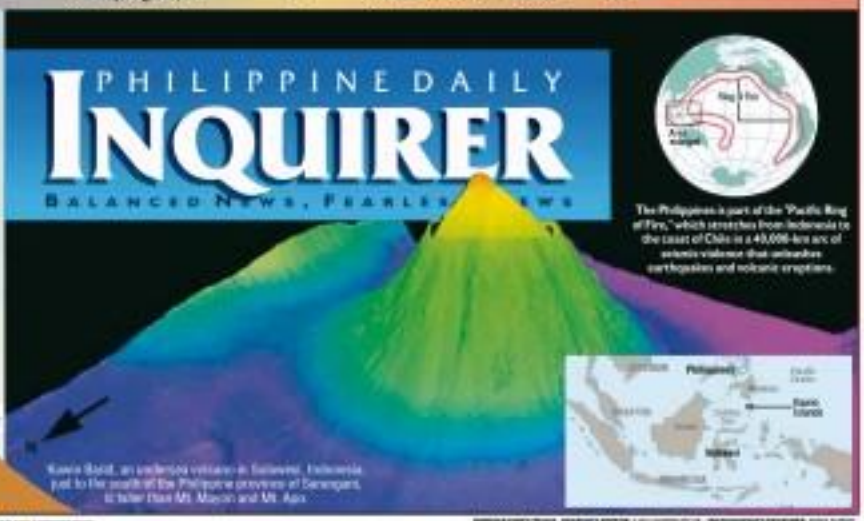
By Cyril L. Bonabonte
Inquirer Research

STRONG EARTHQUAKES recently rocked southern Philippines near a huge undersea volcano lying north of the island group of Sulawesi and newly discovered by a US-Indonesian ocean exploration team.

The Sulawesi Islands are less than 500 kilometers from Sarangani province.

"This is a huge undersea volcano, taller than all but three or four mountains in Indonesia, and rising more than 10,000 feet

NF QUAKES A11



Kawio Barat, an undersea volcano in Sulawesi, Indonesia, just to the south of the Philippine province of Sarangani, is taller than Mt. Mayon and Mt. Apo.

The Philippines is part of the "Pacific Ring of Fire," which stretches from Indonesia to the coast of Chile in a 40,000-km arc of volcanic violence that unleashes earthquakes and volcanic eruptions.

$10B offered for Pagcor

MASKED RALLY Protesters airing concern over the serious marginalization of indigenous peoples wear masks in a march to celebrate Indigenous People's Week in Quezon City. MARY JOYCE

Tycoon Ramon Ang bids for gambling firm

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

WITH PRESIDENT AQUINO facing cash problems, San Miguel Corp. vice chair Ramon S. Ang is proposing the privatization of Philippine Gaming Corp. (Pagcor) to raise as much as $10 billion and transform the country into a tiger economy.

Should Mr. Aquino listen to his suggestion, Ang said in a recent interview with the Inquirer that he himself planned to make a bid to acquire Pagcor with Malaysia's "big boys."

Ang was referring to Robert Kuok, the richest man in Southeast Asia with a net worth of $10 billion; Ananda Krishnan, second wealthiest in the region with a net worth of $7.4 billion; and Francis Yeoh, who runs YTL, one of Malaysia's biggest conglomerates.

"They're all my friends and they are interested in Pagcor," said Ang, whose first investment outside the Philippines was in Malaysia in partnership with former Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad in 1989.

"San Miguel is not interested

TYCOON A12

RAMON Ang: So what if they call me a Malaysian agent?

New casino franchises suspended

By Marlon Ramos

BAD NEWS for casino operators and investors.

Philippine Gaming Corp. (Pagcor) announced yesterday that it was freezing applications for casino franchises following President Aquino's decision to stem the mushrooming of gambling facilities in the country.

Jay Santiago, Pagcor spokesperson, said that the move to suspend the granting of franchises had nothing to do with proposals to privatize the state-run gaming corporation.

He said Pagcor chair Cristino Naguiat had also ordered the review of the operations of existing casinos and VIP Clubs in places not frequented by foreign tourists.

NEW CASINOS A11

US ship tells China: We're here

ABOARD THE USS GEORGE Washington—Cold War enemies the United States and Vietnam demonstrated their blossoming military relations on Sunday as a US nuclear supercarrier floated in waters off the Southeast Asian nation's coast—sending a message that China is not the region's only big player.

The supercarrier's visit comes 35 years after the Vietnam War as the United States and Vietnam are cozying up in a number of areas, from negotiating a controversial deal to share civilian nuclear fuel and technology to agreeing that China needs to work with its neighbors to resolve territorial claims in the South China Sea.

The USS George Washington's stop is officially billed as a commemoration of last month's 15th anniversary of normalized diplomatic relations between

US SHIP A13

Taliban kill 6 US aid workers, 4 others

KABUL—Their last meal was a picnic at a forest in Shamali Valley, high in the Hindu Kush mountains of northern Afghanistan, as they were on their long way home.

The group—a medical aid team of six Americans, a Briton, a German and four Afghans—had just finished eating when they were accosted by gunmen with long dyed-red beards, local police said.

The gunmen marched the aid workers—seven men and three women—into the forest, stood 10 of them in a straight line and shot them. The police found their bodies on Friday, the Badakhshan province police chief, Gen. Aga Noor Kemze, said on Saturday.

The Taliban claimed responsibility, accusing the medical team of being spies and Christian missionaries.

The killings, considered the largest massacre of aid workers in Afghanistan in recent years, vividly demonstrated the increasing insecurity in the north

TALIBAN A4

Life is a blast for employees of call centers

DAYBREAK IS happy hour in a world turned upside down at a trendy bar in Makati City's financial district, the clientele young and loud and with a vague California accent.

Vodka cruisers and beer fly by the bucketful as good friends Gici, Pau and Jeik go off-duty along with the rest of the night shift in the nation's half-million strong business process outsourcing (BPO) workforce.

Even the hors d'oeuvres are edgy—"drunken" shrimp and green mango soaked in pale pilsen—reflecting the punishing lifestyles of the partygoers.

"I used to drink eight bottles of Red Horse at a time and still find my way home," 28-year-old Gici said, discussing a local brew known for its high alcohol content and often called "The Devil's Own Juice."

The group of young women avidly let their hair down as

LIFE IS A1

Clark exec in trouble with wife over pay report

By Jun Malig
Inquirer Central Luzon

CLARK FREEPORT—While unhappy about the report, the president and chief executive officer of Clark Development Corp. (CDC) has found some humor in being listed as the official who gets the second highest salary and financial perks from government.

Benigno Rivaforl said his wife had asked him where he was keeping all of the money he was getting from the government.

"On a humorous note, your news item got me into trouble with my wife as she asked me where I kept the other funds!" Rivaforl said in an e-mail to the Inquirer. But he added that his wife "an-

CLARK A3

DAR: Luisita deal may still be voided

By Kristine L. Alave
in Manila
and Russell Arador
Inquirer Central Luzon

ALTHOUGH A BIG majority of farm workers of the 6,800-hectare Hacienda Luisita appeared to have accepted the compromise agreement, an official of the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) yesterday said the deal between the workers and the plantation partly owned by President Aquino's family could still be voided.

Agrarian Reform Undersecretary Narciso Nieto said the Supreme Court and the DAR would still review the agreement because of the case involving the validity of the stock distribution option (SDO) before the high tribunal.

The SDO scheme agreed on in 1989 gave the farm workers who qualified as beneficiaries of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) 33 percent of the shares of stock in Hacienda Luisita Inc. (HLI) instead of land.

Under the compromise deal, the workers were given two choices by HLI—to retain their shares of stock in the corporation or get parcels of land from 1,300 hectares of the estate.

Nieto said the compromise deal would also be scrutinized if it was made in accordance with existing agrarian reform laws.

HLI put the compromise deal to a vote before the Supreme Court could hear its petition against a Presidential Agrarian Reform Council (PARC) and a

DAR LUISITA A2

WEATHER FORECAST

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Freighter with 17 on board missing

By Jaymee Aning and Jerry E. Esplanada

THE PHILIPPINE COAST GUARD was still searching yesterday for a domestic cargo ship with 17 crewmen that disappeared after encountering big waves and reporting engine trouble.

At least five Coast Guard and private vessels were involved in the search, but bad weather and poor visibility were hampering the effort, according to PCG commander Adm. Wilfredo Tamayo.

Crewmen aboard the 496-ton SF Freighter reported the ship's engines flooded the ship's cabins, Hendon Chua of Seafood Shipping Lines Inc., on Saturday, in report the problems had mostly afterward, all seamen were lost, Tamayo said.

The owner launched an initial search near the ship's last known location off the coast of Mariveles,ar and contacted the Coast Guard, he said.

A Coast Guard plane spotted a ship yesterday in waters off Mariveles, but later determined it was not the missing freighter, Tamayo said.

Passing ships and coastal communities were told to be on the lookout for the ship, which was en route to Manila from Cebu reportedly carrying a cargo of steel bars.

Search halted for now

PCG spokesperson Lt. Commander Armand Balilo, in a phone interview, said the search for the missing vessel was temporarily called off at 5 p.m. yesterday after an Islander plane conducted two sorties but found no trace of the vessel.

The plane had to turn back after encountering bad weather. One of the PCG ships, the BRP Ilocos Norte, also returned to Batangas port because of bad weather.

"We will resume the search on Monday morning, weather permitting," Balilo said.

Meanwhile, the Coast Guard said it sent out on Saturday night a cagboat to rescue another cargo vessel, the MT SF Beijing, which developed engine trouble in the vicinity of Cabra Island in northern Mindoro province afternoon.

The 4,999-gross ton Maltese-flagged vessel, which was en route to Indonesia from China when it developed engine trouble and sent a distress signal that was monitored by the Philippine, Singaporean, South Korean and Australian Coast Guards.

The tugboat Ingeniero towed the ship to Batangas at around 5 p.m. yesterday.

A tropical depression, which originated from the low-pressure area (LPA) that developed into a typhoon over the northeast monsoon," said PCG commandant Tamayo. "By that time, rethinking of the vessel is expected to be much faster and safer too."

"Poor sea and weather conditions across the seasons given by the salvage operators (Royal Ocean Princess Resources Inc.) for the delay in the operations. Sea conditions will be much more stable during the last quarter of the year," said PCG spokesperson Balilo.

He also said PCG officers had completed "underwater search operations for human remains in all of the ship's compartments."

Two years and counting

According to a PCG report, a total of 67 sets of human remains had been recovered from the wreck but only 17 had matching thighs.

"Other items recovered were assorted shelved remains and personal items, such as identification cards, pieces of clothing, cellular phones, bills and coins," the report added.

Earlier, the PCG turned over 83 shelved remains to the Public Attorney's Office for forensic tests to "determine if the recovered bones belong to one or several persons."

PCG officials had expected to refloat the Princess of the Stars by June 15, almost two years after the ship sank off Sibuyan Island in Romblon at the height of Typhoon "Frank."

Built in 1984, the passenger ship was headed for Cebu City from Manila when it was directly hit by the typhoon. With a report from AP

Noy can't decide on holiday honoring pa

By Cathy Yamsuan

MALACAÑANG still has not decided whether to declare Aug. 23, a Monday, a non-working holiday as Aug. 21—Ninoy Aquino Day—falls on a Saturday.

According to Palace spokesperson Edwin Lacierda, President Aquino is not inclined to observe the holiday economics policy laid down by his predecessor, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, especially since the holiday within a personal choice.

The policy celebrates a holiday falling on a weekend on a Friday or Monday to give workers a three-day weekend.

Aug. 21 is the 27th death anniversary of the President's father, the assassinated Sen. Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino Jr.

"There is a law that says Aug. 21 is a holiday but whether President Aquino will celebrate it for Aug. 23 is another matter. He said earlier he did not want to threaten the date's association with the death of his father," Lacierda said.

Lacierda was asked over government station dzBB Badoy ng Bayan if the President "would honor the holiday economic policy left by GMA (Arroyo)."

"He would clarify within the week because we understand people would like to make vacation plans (for the long weekend from Aug. 21 to 23). We will make sure to announce this week the final decision of the President," Lacierda said.

He stressed that the current administration recognizes that "there is a holiday to remember Ninoy but again let me clarify, let me complete, that because of the sensitivity of the President towards celebrating the death anniversary of his father, we would like to get a clarification from the President. There are personal sentiments involved here."

Republic Act No. 9256 marks Aug. 21 "Ninoy Aquino Day," a special non-working holiday.

The law was passed by Congress and approved by Arroyo on Feb. 23, 2004, during the 18th anniversary of the 1986 People Power revolution that restored democracy to the country.

Opposition leader Ninoy Aquino was assassinated as he was being escorted by soldiers off the plane that took him home from exile in the United States. His death is considered the event that triggered a series of massive street protests that culminated in the 1986 People Power revolution of 1986 that booted out the dictator President Marcos. Ninoy's widow Corazon Aquino, who had become a symbol of the people's disgust at the impunity of the dictatorship, was inaugurated president after Marcos' administration was later judged to be the work of a "military conspiracy."

Solons, others oppose legalizing abortion in RP

By Jocelyn R. Uy

THE PHILIPPINE Legislators Committee on Population and Development (PLCPD) composed of, among others, some authors of the reproductive health bills pending in Congress, have asked the public not to consider abortion as a family planning method.

"Legalization of abortion is not the right approach to address the increasing numbers of mothers dying every day due to pregnancy and pregnancy-related complications," PLCPD executive director Rainier Ben Rivaral said yesterday in a statement.

He said the PLCPD strongly opposed the call of the New York-based Center for Reproductive Rights (CRR) for Congress to pass a law that would permit abortion in the country.

"Abortion is not part of the PLCPD's proposed consensus on reproductive health and [we are] not part of any group calling for the legalization of abortion in the Philippines," Ben Rivaral said.

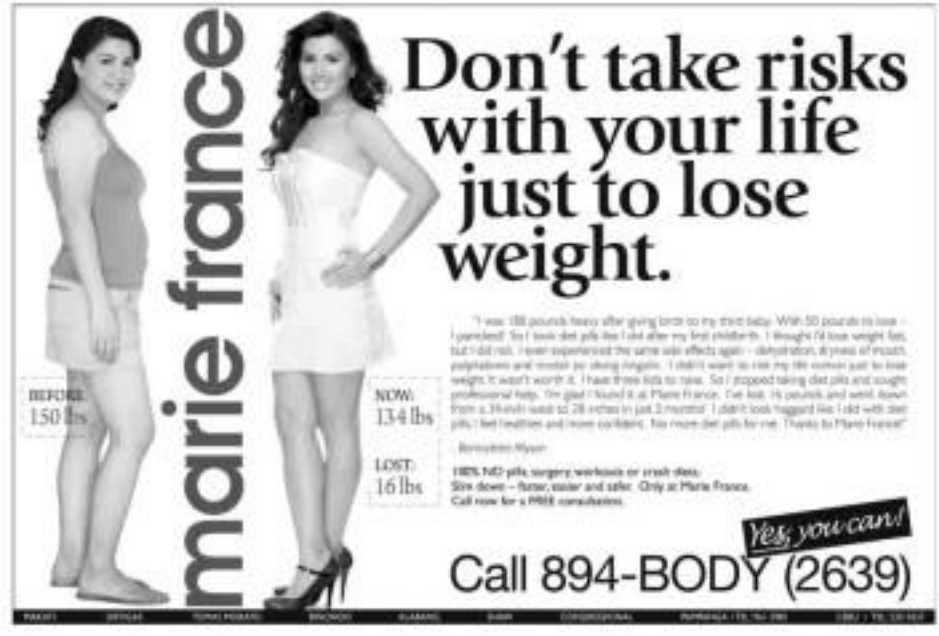
Said while abortion was illegal, the government must still ensure that all women needing post-abortion care must be treated in a "humane and non-judgmental manner," the PLCPD said.

Another group, ng Kapatiran Party (AKP), also condemned CRR's "reckless, irresponsible and dishonest" call for the legalization of abortion in the country.

In a statement, AKP said that CRR, a foreign law firm, "wrongly blames the continued criminalization of abortion as a source of women's right violations."

"Our patriotic pro-life laws do not violate the rights of women. Rather, they protect the inalienable right to life of all persons, including the unborn, around half of whom are female," AKP said.

The CFIE report had said that many Filipina women turned to abortion for economic reasons.



Taliban massacre 10 aid workers

Next page

on part of the country, well outside the Taliban's base.

The massacre also provided chilling evidence of how much more insecure the insurgency has turned in recent months.

Pressured in their traditional areas in the south and east by the growing concentration of Nato forces there, the insurgents have become more active in some once relatively quiet like Badakhshan province.

The insurgents have recently chopped fingers on aging women and children as suicide bombers and on unassuming tribal elders.

Here, it appears the insurgents have also breached the longstanding custom of providing safe passage to aid workers, who have often been free to work in both government and insurgent-dominated areas.

Optometric expedition

Dudley said the group's relatives, nurses and technicians had been hiking in to one of the toughest areas of the country to provide medical treatment and eye care on behalf of the Kabul-based International Assistance Mission, an aid group that has operated in Afghanistan since 1966.

"All indications are this is probably our team," said Bob Evans, executive director of the International Assistance Mission. "They were on an optometric expedition, running an eyecare clinic."

Both Evans and police emphasized, however, that no positive identification of the victims has yet been made.

Even so, Evans confirmed that an Afghan man who survived the attack and later told his story to the police was the group's driver.

Dudley also identified the national's team leader, Dr. Tom Little of Indiana, New York, as one of the dead.

Taliban version

A Taliban spokesperson, Zabiullah Mujahid, said that the aid workers had ignored orders from an insurgent patrol to stop and were shot as they tried to flee.

He said the patrol recovered from the murdered team a Bible in the four languages widely spoken in Afghanistan and maps showing the location of the Taliban in western Afghanistan.

"They were not actually here to provide medicines for people but were here for spying," he said. "The punishment for spying is death."

'Out of the question'

Evans said he doubted the veracity of Taliban claims of responsibility as well as the initial police theory that it was probably a robbery.

Accusations of spying or proselytizing, he said, were "out of the question."

"They would be against the laws of this country and the rules of our organization," Evans said. "Although we are a Christian-supported charity, we would absolutely not proselytize."

He said all of the aid workers had signed agreements not to divulge any information to government or to media outlets.

Little, known in Afghanistan as Doctor Tom, was an optometrist who had been working in the country for the past four decades and spoke local dialects.

Also on the expedition was Dr. Karen Woo, 36, a dentist originally from Taiwan who hosted a party in Kabul last month to raise money for the expedition.

"The expedition will require a lot of physical and mental resolve and will not be without risk," she wrote on a fundraising blog. "The effort is worth it in order to assist those that need it most."

"What's a girl to do?"

Woo, who was engaged to be married, recently had an Afghan bloke make her a full gemstone of emeralds.

"I hear what you're saying about precautions," she wrote in the last entry on her blog before she left on the latest mission, "and seriously, I probably shouldn't be worrying about a ball gown right now, but still, what's a girl to do?"

The other woman, the police commander said, were an American and a German. The International Assistance Mission is withholding their names until a positive identification can be made.

Two of the Afghans were among the dead. A third, the driver, began exiting the Toyota van from the front. "There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is his prophet," said van reformist, he later told police. The first of the fourth Afghan is unclear.

The expedition set out three weeks ago to reach the northeastern corner of Nuristan province, traveling by foot with pack horses to carry their medical equipment, and hiking over a 5,268-meter pass into the southern Parun Valley.

Trained but unpaid

Zarrapi has a driver, all of the aid group's personnel were medically trained. They were three doctors among them, including a dentist and optometrist.

The organizations were all unpaid volunteers. In addition to treating cataracts and other eye problems, they planned to run maternal and infant health and dental clinics in the valley, home to about 50,000 people.

Evans said the aid group had run many such expeditions, as recently as 2004, always in the invitation of local communities, with a total guide, four or five of its expatriate workers had been killed in the past in three separate episodes.

He said the mission was advised that there were no active Taliban in the area, although Afghan officials said the Taliban and other insurgent groups had been active in the northern Nuristan area and even across the border in Badakhshan.

Armed guards

The governor of Nuristan province, Jalaluddin Badri, said police had given the expedition members an armed escort as they left Nuristan province.

When the aid workers crossed into nearby Badakhshan, however, they told authorities they no longer wanted armed guards in their midst.

They said we're doctors and civilians and no one will bother us," said Kunar, the provincial police chief.

He said local residents told police that the well-bonded gunmen spoke the Nuristani dialect from the neighboring province, suggesting they might have been watching the group. It is common in some areas of Afghanistan for older men to dye their beards with henna.

Evans said the outrage would not deter his organization from continuing to work in Afghanistan.

"We have worked here under the Taliban, under the Russians, under the communists, under the warlords and the Taliban," he said. "It'd take to quit now." — New York Times News Service

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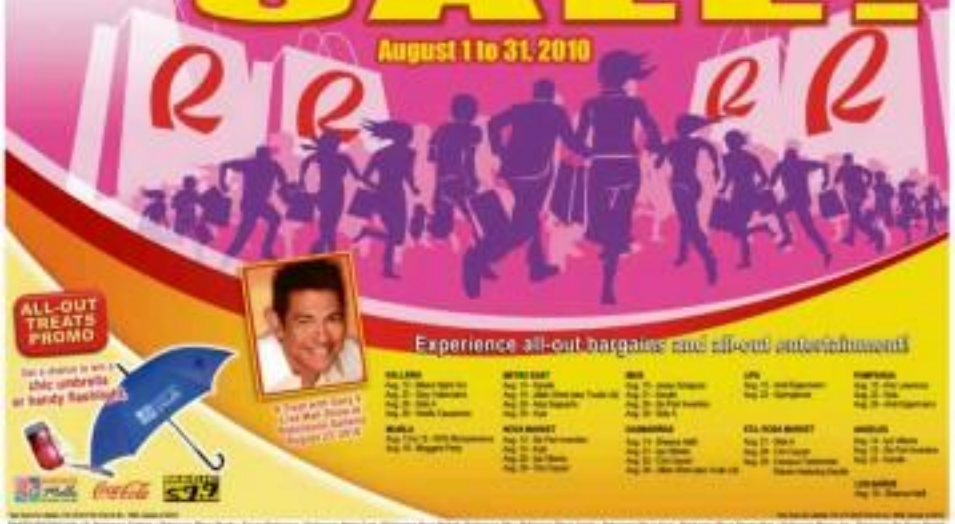

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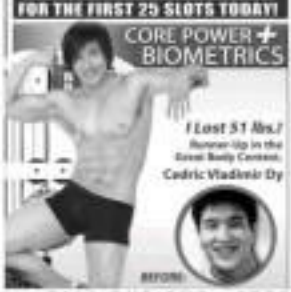

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CALL center employees relax at a restaurant in the financial district of Makati City AFP

Life is a blast for employees of call centers

From page A1

Saturdays, holiday bras, hostess or shopping malls all day so they can socialize with friends outside the industry and sleep at least for one night like a normal person.

Life in many ways is a blast for the young, single and relocated in the outsourcing industry.

Perks and bonuses

Entry-level jobs bring salaries of P11,462.50 ($$$) a month with the promise of triple pay after a five years' experience, generous perks in a country where a third of the population live on the equivalent of P40 ($1) a day.

Jobs are plentiful and cut cuts with generous perks, such as 13th- and 14th-month pay, performance bonuses and free medical insurance.

And the outsourcing industry—which has soaked up millions of call center, accounting and other back-office jobs from the developed world—is increasing an increasingly vital part of the business economy.

The BPO industry's 500,000 Filipino employees are the world's second biggest revenue-earning workforce behind India.

The industry's revenues, which already account for 8 percent of the country's gross domestic product, are growing at double digit rates annually, according to the Business Processing Association Philippines.

Early burnout

On a more micro-level, stricter 24/7 service industries—including customer-care lines, fast and frenzied restaurants—have sprung up around the new office towers to serve the needs of the booming sector.

However, there are concerns about the way the industry is changing young adults' resting as well as the pressures the workers have as they constantly help customers on the other side of the world.

The odd hours, late shifts, tedious workloads and professional demands often drive staff—particularly call center workers—to early burnout.

Carl Pua and Jobs—who spoke on condition their surnames were not used—are customers from earlier call center jobs.

"Sometimes, you would be handling 200 calls in one and 250 shifts would be on your head. You don't have a moment's rest," said Pua, 32, who graduated to a higher paying job than filling office equipment procurement for 24 companies.

She said call center staff typically get only two 15-minute cigarette breaks—either side of a 30-minute meal break—every eight-hour shift.

Angry customers

Carl said one of the hardest parts of call center work was simply dealing with customers angry at having to speak with someone on the other side of the world.

"One customer said: 'I don't even talk to you. I want to talk to an American' ... I cried," Carl said.

And while Filipino BPO workers earn 10 percent more than some age-mates in other industries, one in three quit every year, according to an International Labor Organization study released last month.

The turnover rate is four times the national average.

"Five years in one job is a long time in this industry," Carl said.

New world

The arrival of the BPO industry a decade ago also brought about changes in values, dress, and societal practices, according to Josefina Hatzenbuhler, a professor with the University of the Philippines' Population Institute.

"What shocked us most was that he both call center and non-call center workers the level of premarital sex was very high," she said, citing a health and lifestyle survey on young Filipinos completed by her team the year.

Heavy drinking and smoking among students set off work hard, and high consumption of junk food also stood out.

"The world is different now and the single thing driving this I'm sure is technology," Hatzenbuhler said.

Both Carl and Pua said they had heard similar stories in the call center after they went to work at, which have been in operation enhanced until.

"Our sleeping patterns were for both years, [some of my friends told me that their sex lives changed, things that happened there," Carl said.

Few options

The trend has worrying implications on public health, said Rosario Manalastas, the country official for the United Nations Joint UN Program on HIV/AIDS.

Most new HIV infections now occur among young Filipinos, compared with the 1990s when the country's large overseas-based work force, including sailors, was the most risk group, Imperato said.

Despite the statistics and risks, those in the industry are few other options as a country where the only way they would earn that kind of money would be to join the exodus of Filipinos working abroad.

Jobs said she had wanted to leave years in the industry to get a degree but economic ran out, and her priority now was to hopefully marry a family.

"I want a boyfriend. And I want a family and a baby in two to three years' time," said the 26-year-old teacher. AFP

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Compromise deal may preempt SC, says Honasan

THE HEAD of the Senate committee on agrarian reform is wondering why Hacienda Luisita Inc. (HLI) has hoped a new compromise deal with farm workers when the Supreme Court has set to rule on the dispute over the stock distribution option (SDO) of the estate 20 years ago.

Sen. Gregorio Honasan II said a new agreement giving workers the choice of getting a parcel of land or a share in the corporation could be seen as a means to preempt the high court.

"What if the Supreme Court ruled that the SDO is unconstitutional? What will happen to the farmers who choose to get the cooperative shares? Those are questions that need to be answered," Honasan said in a phone interview.

Honasan also pointed out the SDO as an alternative to land distribution for landowners had been rejected and nothing a new SDO or this point would violate the law.

The senator, who launched several coup attempts against Mrs. Arroyo's members, said he would meet with Agrarian Reform Secretary Virgilio de los Reyes today to discuss whether a public hearing was necessary to thresh out the issues involving the new deal.

"I heard he (De los Reyes) was also caught flat-footed by the new deal," Honasan said.

He hoped that a public hearing on the matter would help disambiguate the issue.

"But even farmers are getting fed to the crossfire by people (whose views are tainted by) their support for people in power, relatives in the administration, or in the last administration," he said.

Assistant Sup. Rafael Mariano claimed that the management of HLI forced workers to sign the new deal after it claimed that "more than 90 percent" of the farmers had elected to keep their shares under the SDO scheme.

"Obviously, the Luisita farmers are not acting of their own will. The Cojuangco-Aquinos continuously act to herded herds and treat farmers as farm workers who can be bossed to do and sign anything, including a dress deal that violates the supreme SDO and the Cojuangco family heads' ownership and control over the lands," he said in a statement.

Mariano, who is also Bayan Muna Party-list representative, called on the Filipino peasantry to launch "widespread protests" against the deal. GLC Cabacungan Jr.

DAR: Luisita deal may still be voided

From page A1

DAR director canceling the SDO scheme and ordering the estate's owners to redistribute 4,915 ha to farmer-beneficiaries.

The high court is scheduled to hear the petition on Aug. 18.

As of yesterday, the DAR had yet to receive a copy of the deal. "From what I heard, they're still signing," Rivera said.

Strong claims

Rivera said DAR reports from the plebiscites showed "a strong claims for the SDO."

With at least 7,000 farmers casting their votes on the direction of the agrarian reform program in Hacienda Luisita, the SDO appeared to be the scheme that farm workers would favor in keeping their stake in the sugar estate.

Partial results of the three-day voting in 11 polling booths on Sunday morning showed that 5,614 farm workers voted for the SDO. Only 16 voted for land distribution.

The farmers represent about 59 percent of the 10,502 beneficiaries of HLI.

The voting closed at 5 p.m. on Sunday, but the official turnout was not available at press time.

Lawyer Antonio Lopez, HLI spokesperson, said "not less than 7,000 farmer-beneficiaries" cast their votes.

While HLI has yet to consolidate the figures, at least 90 percent of those who voted opted to support SDO, Lopez said.

He described the number of farmers who chose SDO as "overwhelming."

Figures on Sunday morning showed that in Barangay Tarlac, 536 votes for the SDO while only five votes for land distribution; in Antipolo, 451 (SDO) and nine (land); in Hacienda, 290 (SDO) and none (land); in Balaoc, 378 (SDO) and two (land); in Luisita —in Mapalacsiao, 864 (SDO) and six (land); in Bunga, 447 (SDO) and two (land); on Pando, 344 (SDO) and five (land); in Cut-Cut, 543 (SDO) and 12 (land); in Pandoc or Matalog, 244 (SDO) and six (land); and in San Sebastian, 593 (SDO) and none for land.

An 11th polling booth, called "barangkalig," was intended for HLI employees who are also beneficiaries. The partial count in that booth: 406 (SDO) and two (land).

Coercion

"There appeared to be a strong haste for (SDO) that was under normal conditions. If there's coercion or threat, that's a different scenario," Mars said.

Asked if the contract could be invalidated if it proved that it was done with coercion and harassment, Mars replied, "yes, to it not something that we be hidden. It will eventually come out in the Supreme Court hearings."

As of yesterday, he said the DAR had yet to receive reports that the claimants were forced or threatened to sign the deal.

Mars also said that the DAR would disown any the conversion of the deal and the signatories. "We say these farmers voted," He said to know if those who signed were the bona fide claims and were shuddled by DAR as beneficiaries," he said.

But militant groups said farmers for the farmers' union in the sugar plantation said the military had a hand in compelling workers to sign the deal.

Militarized zone

Albert Bolalpo, a lawyer for one of the four unions in the plantation, said some of their members signed the deal out of fear in the compound has become a militarized zone.

HLI bypassed the unions and made overtures to workers and farmers in the past, Bolalpo said.

Some of the signatories, Bolalpo said, are former members of the unions who sided with the management over the offer of 1,300 ha, significantly lower than their demand of nearly 5,000 ha.

Bolalpo, in a previous interview, said HLI included dead persons and nonexistent workers on its list of claimants.

Presidential spokesperson Edwin Lacierda said government insists DAR lead-by-wire today and that the workers were not coerced.

Peaceful resolution

Lacierda said any compromise reached following the conclusion of the referendum would still be submitted to Supreme Court.

"The President is not in any way involved in the negotiations or in the outcome of this compromise agreement. He will respect the development and he continues to hope that there would be a peaceful resolution to the issue," he added.

On the same station, Presidential Communications Operations Secretary Herminio Coloma Jr. said it wouldn't not be realistic for the President to put pressure on his relatives to give in to demands to redistribute the estate estate.

Mr. Aquino, son of the late President Corazon Cojuangco Aquino, owns not more than 1 percent of the 71 percent shares of stock assigned to HLI.

Survey of sentiments

Lawyer Mendoza said the plebiscite was "not described as above board, was a "mess" or "survey" of sentiments of farm workers in the Cojuangco-Aquino family-owned estate.

He challenged leaders of the United Luisita Workers Union (ULWU) and the Alyansa ng mga Manggagawang Bukid sa Asyenda Luisita (Amalia) to cite the law that the process had violated.

"But in just unanimous building (that is in accordance with the) Comprehensive Agreement signed by HLI management and workers' groups of Hacienda Luisita," the HLI executive said.

Mendoza said the company would submit the results of the survey to the Supreme Court today. "If there would be enough reasons raise noted."

He said the management made sure that the process was transparent.

Legality questioned

Rolly Hayal, farmers chair, said the group and three would submit a petition to the Supreme Court today to question the legality of the compromise agreement and the survey.

He described the agreement and the survey as "blatant acts of deception" designed to keep the lands in the hands of the Cojuangco family.

The Sumandoks Agrarian Reform Movement (SARM-Luisita) said the compromise was "worse" than the 1989 deal because it sought to reverse DAR orders revoking the SDO and subjecting ARB hacienda to the control to compulsory acquisition for distribution to farm workers. With reports from Cathy Yamsuan in Manila and Tonette Orejas, Inquirer Central Luzon

CENTRAL. Residents in the hacienda support surrounding factory at Hacienda Luisita in Tarlac. (Inquirer photo)

'I am too old to till the land'

HACIENDA LUISITA, Tarlac City—Esperanza Balagot, 63, of Barangay Pasong Bayo (Luisita), said she chose the stock distribution option (SDO) because she could not work on the farm anymore. "I am too old to till the land," she said.

Balagot also said she worried the financial assistance that Hacienda Luisita Inc. (HLI) promised to give farmers is not secure.

Lawyer Vigor Mendoza, HLI vice president for external affairs, said each farmer who opted for land distribution would receive financial assistance from the company. He, however, did not give details on the financial package.

Angelito Mendoza, 61, of Barangay Luisita, said she signed in favor of land distribution because she needed land on which to plant various crops to feed her children and grandchildren.

"A small parcel will do," she said. "My children and grandchildren need to eat. I have many children and grandchildren."

She said the price of cassava had gone up and the only way she could provide for her kids were farmers. Lawyer Mendoza, who is also a father and grandfather, said: "We only see cure to make coffee. We want the grass then we see the ace coffee to go with cassava," Reports from Rudolf Norder and Tonette Orejas, Inquirer Central Luzon

STILL WORKING. A farmer braves the heavy downpour while working inside the troubled hacienda. (Inquirer photo)

Clark exec in trouble with wife over pay report

From page B1

disclosed my situation and was punished with me."

Rivillo described as "inaccurate" the Commission on Audit (COA) report on the salaries and allowances of top executives of government-owned and -controlled corporations (GOCCs).

"My cell phone was also full of text messages, many using foul language," he said. "I guess they know my person and reputation."

Rivillo disputed the report that he got P13,000 million in 2009, saying that he received "less than P5 million a year" in salary and allowances.

He said the P13 million cited in the COA report was just "lumped under [my] name and accountability, and as compensation," and subject to audit and validation.

P131,000 in basic pay

In e-mail and text messages sent to the reporter on Monday night, Rivillo said his basic salary was P131,000, with a take-home pay of P117,000 after taxes and deductions. By contrast, President Aquino has a take-home pay of P62,000 on a gross monthly salary of P90,000.]

"Our salary structure at clearly supervised, rationalized and tabled. Yes, I know for sure for 7 years," said Rivillo, who served as COA director from 1999 until he was appointed president in July 2008.

On a yearly basis, he gets a salary of P1.57 million, including 13th month and 14th month pay.

His salary has not been adjusted since he was appointed CEO head, Rivillo said.

Plus per diem, bonus

The COA report showed that in 2009, Rivillo received P1.578 million in salary, P612,400 in per diem for sitting on the boards of CIC and Clark International Airport Corp., P606,206 in representation and transportation allowances and P308,344 in bonus and incentives or a total compensation of P3.015 million.

The report showed that he also received P6.5 million in retirement and benefits and P187,411 in "other expenses."

Approved by board

But Rivillo said the compensation's amount shelled out by his office was approved by the CIC board of directors for expenses like promotions, advertisements and public relations efforts.

These expenses "cannot be predicted with absolute accuracy" and cannot be capped and restricted "as it may impede corporate initiatives for quantifiable expenses," he said.

"[Since the fund usage is for] value-added and well-audited items, it is entrusted under the authority and accountability of the president and CEO, not his personal use, but for purposes of his judgment and his executive officers, as this may occur and cannot await the last calculations by the board ... that needs [only] twice a month," Rivillo said.

Armand Arreza, Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority (SBMA) administrator, who topped the COA list, defended the enjoyment compensation and benefits of GOCC executives.

"Certainly, we have nothing to hide. Particularly with regard to matters of compensation, I've been there but in a lot greater transparency," he told GMA.

The SBMA has forged negotiations with [illegible] agencies, which includes the calling of

RIVILLO: Basic salary is only P131,000 a month

[illegible] to review hiring and collective, he said. With reports from Rudolf Norder, Gil Cabacungan, Inquirer Central Luzon

'Off-record testimony didn't help Garci probe'

By Dona Pazzibigan

THE HEAD of the military fact-finding committee that investigated senior officers' alleged involvement in cheating in the 2004 presidential election claimed that their findings were inconclusive because they were not completely telling the truth when he recently told reporters that he had given the committee a dossier of attempted cheating operations in Ilocos Region alone.

A military officer who said he was speaking in behalf of former Navy flag officer in command, Vice Adm. Mateo Mayuga, said Angue had insisted on testifying off the record, as his testimony could be used in court or only in the first case board absolved three generals accused of rigging the election in favor of former President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

But Angue, now the outgoing commander of the Armed Forces of the Philippines National Capital Region Command (NCR-Com), said that very part of his testimony was made off the record.

Captain Ball ran operations

"That is not totally correct. While there was a portion at the start that I requested to be off the record, the rest of my testimony consisted mostly of 'to the record.' he said when asked for comment.

Angue, a member of Philippine Military Academy Class 1976, said reporters last week that an attempt was made to rig the 2004 election in the then area of responsibility in Subic Angue at the time was head of Naval Task Force 82.

Angue had said that a "very influential person" who is believed to be "Captain Ball" had headed the cheating operation until the end of May when he refused to cooperate.

Angue said he disclosed these details to the Mayuga board which cleared Generals Roy Rosario, Hermogenes Esperon Jr. and Delfin Bangit of being part of cheating operations for Arroyo, and Sens. Francisco Gaudiel and Ralph Recto of the opposition.

The report was kept confidential during the Arroyo administration.

'Inadmissible, hearsay'

The military officer who spoke on condition of anonymity said Angue had made it appear in the media that the Mayuga board had gone on to exonerate the implicated officers despite Angue's incriminating testimony.

"That is a half truth," said the military officer.

He quoted Mayuga as saying: "How could I see that against the accused officers when he said that those were officers cited in that same admirable evidence, that is hearsay.

"Even throughout the proceedings I was guided by lawyers because I did not want to make a mistake. That's why all the proceedings were guided by the law."

The officer added: "So for Mr. Angue's statement that were made off the record, the areas that we can do about them is to see them in the review of our policy to make sure we can review the system. But those cannot be used to pin down people because then we're not made under oath."

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, August 5, 2019
19th Week in Ordinary Time
Feria; Dedication of the Creed
1st Reading: Heb 9:1-7, 11-14
Gospel: Mk 12:35-37

While Jesus was in Solomon's portico, he said to them, "The Son of Man will be delivered into human hands, and they will kill him, but after three days he will rise." The Twelve were deeply grieved. On returning to Capernaum, the Temple tax collectors came to Peter and asked him, "Does your master pay the temple tax?" He answered, "Yes."

Peter then entered the house; but beforehand, Jesus asked him, "What do you think, Simon? Who pay taxes or tributes to the kings of the earth: their sons or the other people?" When Peter answered, "The others," Jesus said to him, "The sons are free. But so as not to offend them, go to the sea, throw in a hook and open the mouth of the first fish you catch. You will find a coin in it. Take it and give it to them for me and for you."

Commentary

The collectors of the temple tax came to Peter and asked, 'Does your teacher pay the temple tax?'

Like us, Jesus lived in two worlds—a public one and a spiritual one.

He paid the temple tax to remain the exclusive and he went to the temple to assert his true spiritual life.

Christ is maintaining the faith and he tells us faith are two different things.

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Probe teachers' local recruiters, gov't urged

By Jerome Aning

TWO LABOR GROUPS have urged the government to conduct a parallel investigation into the plight of 300 Filipino teachers in Louisiana, USA, who said their recruiters last week for various criminal offenses ranging from racketeering, human trafficking, extortion, to fraud and wire fraud.

The Partido ng Manggagawa (PM) and Pambansang Federasyon Labor Independent Confederation (Pulido) made the appeal in support of the class suit filed by the Filipino Educators Federation of Louisiana.

Pulido general secretary Annie Overjero Geron said the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) and other government agencies concerned should look into the teachers' charges of illegal and unethical recruitment practices committed by the recruitment firms LDI and IPMS.

"There are documents proving the recruitment agencies charged there

highly exorbitant fees. There is proof of harassment against the Filipino teachers. They were also forced to sign irregular contracts," Bataquel-Overjero said.

The recruiters, who slow three years ago to Louisiana to work mainly in the East Baton Rogue school district, said they ended up in debt, working in poor conditions and were threatened with lawsuits, or dismissed or deportation after they complained about being underpaid. Last week, the Louisiana Federation of Teachers said his lawsuits, PMO former officer for the US.

He said the Philippine government should ensure "stronger" legislation that would ensure the protection of the rights of migrant labor.

"The exploitation of migrant workers is a growing problem here in the US. This lawsuit is again another arena of battle to expose those activities that are out to exploit migrant labor," he said.

Evangelista-Ferrer said the lawsuit was a landmark action that could potentially benefit all Filipino migrant workers.

"The class suit holds a lot of significance for our Filipino migrant teachers. It is the first of its kind to be filed in the US and we hope that the PEF will get the favorable and just decision that they rightfully deserve. A favorable resolution of matter will set a good precedent and help boost our migrant workers' rights in the United States and elsewhere," she said in a statement.

After long delays, OFWs' remains finally home; more seen in Iran

By Jerome Aning
and Jerry Esplanada

AFTER MORE than a month's delay, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) finally completed on the means to bring home today the remains of an overseas Filipino worker killed on Kish Island in Iran.

The remains of another OFW who died of a heart attack in Tehran were also brought home over the weekend—this one after more than a year's delay.

The repatriation from Iran of the remains of Rhoda Lloyd Carmen had caused a stir after the OWW group Migrante International reported that Philippine embassy officials in Tehran had asked Carmen's family to shoulder the cost of an autopsy and air freight for the return of his remains to the Philippines amounting to almost P300,000.

The DFA in Manila also reportedly tried to collect about $8,000 (P374,000) from Carmen's mother for the repatriation.

But Foreign Affairs Assistant Secretary Eduardo Malaya, quoting a report from Charge d'affaires Marissa Dueñas of the Philippine Embassy in Iran, confirmed that the remains of Carmen would be arriving early today via Gulf Air flight from Bahrain.

The DFA said the expenses for the repatriation were paid from the discretionary assistance to nationals Fund.

A doctor-acclaimed bodies?

The DFA, he said, is also checking reports that more than a dozen bodies of OFWs have remained unclaimed in Iranian morgues.

Carmen, who hails from Tagaig City was stabbed dead on July 1 in a fight with a Sudanese national on Kish Island. The island is in the border region of Iran where Filipinos seeking for work permits normally stay.

According to the DFA group Migrante International, one of Carmen's relatives, Lolit Gonzaga, who resides in nearby Abu Dhabi, went to Bahrain claim his body. During her visit to the morgues, Gonzaga said she was shocked to learn that apart from Carmen's, there were at least a dozen more bodies of OFWs there.

Unable to produce the money asked for by the DFA to bring his body home, the family sought the help of their congressman, Segundo "Egay" Fredelin Tinga, who spoke to the DFA about the matter.

The management of the hotel where Carmen stayed paid for the hospital expenses and transfer of the body to the Philippine Embassy in Tehran.

The embassy said it assisted Carmen's mom and sisters in Iran after they arrived in Tehran on July 27, making arrangements for them, in addition to the two nights and of three. They returned to Dubai in the United Arab Emirates on July 30.

The DFA also said it had already sent a note verbale to the Iranian foreign ministry to verify if there were no criminal remains of other Filipinos on Kish. It has yet to receive a reply.

The case of Marilou Sablay

Meanwhile, the remains of OFW Marilou Sablay finally arrived from Taiwan on Saturday, more than a year after the died of cardiac arrest. Sablay's remains were finally received and cremated on July 31. Her ashes were brought home by Manila Economic and Cultural Office officer Carlo Aquino, who said he would ship it to Sablay's family in Iloilo.

Sablay died on April 17, 2009, but the Bureau and the OFW OUMWA were unable to repatriate her remains because they could not solve technicality. Even if her family confirmed her identification a week after her death, Taiwanese authorities did not agree to her request because the finger-prints in her Alien Residence Certificate did not match her finger.

After lying in the morgue for months, Sablay was buried in Taipei on March 20 this year.

A DOH autopsy was finally taken for Sablay's remains and it was matched positively with a sample taken from Sablay on June 20.

Relations with RP to remain warm, vows South Korea

THE PHILIPPINES can look forward to continuing warm relations with South Korea, Foreign Affairs Secretary Alberto Romulo said yesterday in a report to the Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs.

South Korean Prime Minister Chung Un-Chan and Foreign Minister Yu Myung-Hwan and Southeast Asian Affairs Director Park Byeon Yu pledged to "sustain the level of bilateral cooperation" between the Philippines and Korea."

The officials also acknowledged the assistance of the Philippine government during the Korean War in 1950.

In a related development, Vice President Jejomar Binay was in South Korea from Aug. 3 to 5. He presided over the 27th Asia Pacific Boy Scouts Jamboree in Saemangeum City in his capacity as chair of the Asia-Pacific Scout Committee on Youth Development of the Scout Movement.

As chair of the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council, Secretary Binay met with officials of the Korean Ministry of Land, Transport and Maritime Affairs for a briefing on Korea's housing and land-use policies.

He also met with Korean investors on agriculture, housing construction, and development of alternative sources of energy.

During the first quarter of 2010, Korea topped the list of foreign investors in the Philippines with P23.6 billion, which was 53.1 percent of the total approved foreign direct investments for that period, according to the DTI. Jerome Aning

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Actor Charlie Davao dies of cancer at 75

By Marinel R. Cosa

DAVAO-style kicked in 2008

ACTOR CHARLIE Davao died yesterday morning in a Manila hospital where he was being treated for colon cancer, his family has confirmed. He was 75.

"We don't want unexpected," said his son Ricky Davao, himself an actor.

"I was shocked by the news. He earlier showed signs that his health was improving," said Ricky, who was in Cebu at the time of the interview. "That's why I decided to leave for manila."

Ricky later boarded a 1 p.m. flight back to Manila.

Charlie, who was known for portraying characters mostly in the movies and on television, passed away at 11:30 a.m. at the Philippine General Hospital. He was diagnosed with colon cancer in 2009.

"Before he died, I was able to speak to him on the phone. My daughter said he kept asking for me when I talked," Ricky told the reporters. "Although I feel bad that I wasn't there with him, at least my siblings and children were all by his side."

He said funeral arrangements were still being made.

Melvin Glenn Rigos, producer of sometime TV show "Eat...Bulaga!" and one of Ricky's close friends, said: "The doctors earlier told the family that the PGH," they said.

Rigos said the last spoke with Davao early this year at the wedding of one of the actor's children.

"I noticed that Tito Charlie had lost so much weight, but during the ceremony I saw in his eyes that he was really happy," she said.

Actors Ara Mina and Dennis were one of the many professional actors she had worked with. "Sayang na artistang to, nadadala ko sana pa (Working together in a scene, he was very convincing. He was very caring," she said.

Born Charlie Delso in Iloilo City, he came to Manila in 1954 to study. He graduated being a commerce graduate at the University of the East and working as a comedian and part model.

Davao, who would become known for his "coconut comedy" final part roles, landed his first major part in the 1960 movie "Kampanerang Kuba." Among his most memorable films were "Kaming Mga Talyada" (1992) with Jaclyn Charlie Davao and Jose Mari Gonzales, and "Tinda Lit" (1993) with Elma Ramos.

He also appeared in his own sitcom Claudine Barretto in "Made-in-Pasa" on ABS-CBN in 1997. He had supporting roles in "Barya," "Sweetlala," and "Tinoy Rider" all on GMA 7. Charlie was last seen in "Esan Darating ang Umaga" on GMA 7 in 2000.

Everything you ever wanted to know about Manila up at meet

THE MANILA Studies Association, Inc. (MSA), with the assistance of the National Commission for Culture and Arts, will hold its 19th annual conference on Aug. 31-Sept. 3 at the H. Thomas Building of Colegio de San Juan de Letran in Intramuros, Manila.

The registration fee is P2,000.

Papers presented

The papers to be presented are: "The Japanese Controversy of Manila Bishop Michael Pius D. Through the Eyes of a Japanese Merchant" by Augustus V. de Viana; "To the Person Sitting in Darkness"—Misli: Poesia, The Anti-Imperialist League and the American Resistance to the Philippine-American War (1899-1902)" by Jose Victor Z. Torres; "Seven-year in Spanish Colonial Manila" by Lourdes D.C. de Viana; "Public Health, Citizenship and Self-Rule in Colonial Philippines, 1901-1922" by Ma. Mercedes G. Planta.

"A Requiem for Commissary Belo-Isolle, Semplado, Manila (1604-1920)" by Maria Gaerlan; "Gino-Sino: Spanish Beginnings of Philippine Cinema" by Rob Inverarity; "From Manila to Frontier California: Asian Goods from Manila Supplied to Californian Presidios as Discovered in Spanish Language Documents" by Veronica A. Dado; "Bonds: Ang Hamon ng Bagong Sigla" by Bill S. Ortiz-Magsalin Jr.;

Archaeology panel

"Dalos ha Kanon de Isaw-maray" by Jerry Inching; "Hayaan Ilang Ilampuan Ang Mong: Ling Isa-maraya-tiking Paglalakad sa Kasaysayan ng Letter" by Manuel Zamora Jr.; and "Bagong Pag-Angkin' sa Kasaysayan ng Gitna Gamit" by Fernando B. Zialcita.

A panel on archaeology and history will have the following presenters: "Victor A. Paz (Philippine Iron Rivers in Nat. Prehistory)"; "Zandro Vil Imraen ("The Archaeology of Lubang Island and its Significance to Understanding 19th Century Philippine History"); and Grace Barreto-Tesoro ("Archaeology William Ray Grunsell Question of Philippine Plates").

Inquiries

The MSA, formally established in June 1989, is a non-profit professional organization devoted to the study and research of all aspects of Manila studies.

For inquiries, contact Lourdes D.C. de Viana at 09175449211, Bernardita R. Church@ 921-45795 and mail to ibcchurch@yahoo.com or Manuel B. Tamayo 527-7695 to 97, or e-mail manilastudies-conv2010@gmail.com or dimis_mm@yahoo.com.

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US ship tells China: We're here

From page A1

the former Foe.

But the timing also reflects Washington's heightened interest in maintaining security and stability in the Asia-Pacific region amid tensions following the sinking of a South Korean warship in March, which killed 46 sailors. North Korea has been blamed for the attack, but has vehemently denied any involvement.

Just a month during its joint security meetings in Melanesia visited, Hanoi, US Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton also angered China by unexpectedly telling on the communist powerhouse to resolve territorial disputes with neighboring Southeast Asian countries over islands in the South China Sea.

Disputed Spratlys

China claims the entire sea and the disputed Spratly and Paracel islands over which it exercises complete sovereignty.

But Vietnam, Taiwan, Malaysia, Brunei and the Philippines also have staked claims on all or some of the territory, which small, chic-vital shipping lanes, important fishing grounds and believed rich oil and natural gas reserves.

PAGASA, one of the disputed islands in the Kalayaan group in the Spratlys. AFP/CNA PHOTO

Clinton announced that the United States had a national interest in seeing the claims resolved.

"The gentleman's (Rodham Clinton) note comment herself, publicly, as sovereignty of the South China Sea and to push that back, it's only to the extent as it claims that is not enforced, is going to be very difficult," said Arthur Waldron, an international relations specialist at Bar University of Pennsylvania.

"So we are playing with fire, reminding the Chinese that we have not collapsed into post-great possession, and that we have other friends in the region."

Balance of power

Vietnam did not long been vocal about its issue, promoting China's plans to bring tourists to the islands and most recently seismic studies conducted near the Paracels. Last month, China also held naval drills in the South China Sea.

"Vietnam does not support condoning China's but Chi doesn't reflect Agents meeting would like to see each major power offset the other," Carl Thayer, a Vietnam expert at the Australian Defense Force Academy in Canberra, said, referring to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

"Quite simply, those are not very subtle signals that Vietnam wants the United States to stay engaged in the region to balance China."

Formidable beast

The USS George Washington is a formidable beast sporting with muscle. A permanent resident of the Pacific based in Japan, the supercarrier is a floating city that can carry up to 75 aircraft, more than 5,000 sailors and weapons and about 1.9 million kilograms of bombs.

It lurked on Sunday's waters off the coastal town of Danang, Vietnam's jumping off point for the disputed islands.

The supercarrier's visit to Vietnam followed hot days of high-profile military exercises last month with South Korea aimed at showing solidarity following the sinking of the 1,200-ton Cheonan navy ship. The drills ramped Pyongyang and drew repeated criticisms from its Chinese ally.

A Chinese newspaper ran a front-page essay last week strongly hinting that China also is not happy about reports that Vietnam and the United States are negotiating a civilian nuclear deal and technology deal that would allow Vietnam to research uranium on its own soil.

'No-enrichment' pledge

US state department spokesperson Ill. Crowley said China had not been consulted about the talks, but he would not discuss the specifics of the enrichment provisions.

Congressional aides have said the agreement will likely not contain a so-called no-enrichment pledge, which the US requires in the "gold standard" for civilian nuclear cooperation accords to ensure countries are not being used to build a nuclear weapon.

Vietnam has denied having any plans to enrich uranium under consideration.

Clinton's visit to Danang is particularly symbolic as it floats off the coast of resort Danang, once the site of a bustling US military base during the Vietnam War, which ended April 30, 1975, when northern communists forces seized control of the US-backed capital of South Vietnam, reuniting the country.

Some 58,000 Americans and an estimated 3 million Vietnamese were killed during the war.

Relations have drained since the former foes shook hands in 1995. The United States is Vietnam's top export market and American was the country's No. 1 foreign investor. Two-way trade reached $21.4 billion in 2009.

Military ties have also grown since the first US warship ship visited Ho Chi Minh City in 2000, including high-level defense talks and training. AP

RP quakes near undersea volcano

From page A1

(1,200 meters) from the sea floor in waters more than 10,000 feet (3,000 meters) deep," Art Holdaru, OS chief scientist for the first legs of the expedition, said in a press release.

The volcano is named Kavin Baron, referring to the ocean west of Kavin Islands, and rises around 3,500 meters from the sea floor. In contrast, Mount Apo, the Philippines' highest peak, is 2,954 meters tall.

On July 24, three major earthquakes — magnitude-eight-plus within an hour of each other — shook the Moro Gulf off Mindanao, with magnitudes of 8.0 and 7.1 on the Richter scale.

Because the quakes occurred at great depths, there appeared dissipated and did not cause any damage on land, according to the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology.

The estimate also said the quakes were tectonic in origin and had nothing to do with the undersea volcano.

Ninety percent of volcanoes erupt in a "relatively quiet way similar in nature to the effusion of lava from Mayon Volcano's crater earlier this year," according to Didier Lagoy, an associate professor at the University of the Philippines National Institute of Geological Sciences.

If Kavin Baron is one of those, an eruption would only cause lava flow, which would not result in considerable damage to surrounding areas.

"However, if the volcano is like Mount Pinatubo which erupts explosively, it might cause destructive lahars," Lagoy said in a recent interview.

Krakatoa blast

Lagoy recalled the eruption of Krakatoa volcano between Java and Sumatra in 1883, which caused a tsunami that devastated coastal towns and killed about 40,000 people.

"If such a strong eruption would happen now, the damage can be far greater as coastal communities have increased," he said.

A tsunami and a magnitude 7.8 earthquake, caused by the movement of the Celebes Trench, struck Minahassa in 1859, and killed some 9,000 people.

The trench is to the vicinity of Kavin Baron.

Ring of fire

A strong eruption might also generate pyroclastic flows with temperatures of about 400 degrees Celsius and speeds of 300 kilometers per hour, Lagoy said.

But if the volcano's center is far from the sea surface, some pyroclastic could happen eruption columns be added.

The Philippines is part of the "Pacific Ring of Fire," which stretches from Indonesia to the coast of Chile in 6-40,000 historic earthquakes and volcanic outbreaks earthquakes almost every day and triggers volcanic eruptions.

More than half of the world's active volcanoes make up the Ring of Fire, which is located at the borders of the Pacific Plate and other major tectonic plates.

The exploration that shows and Kavin Baron is the first joint Philippines-ocean expedition. It may even lead to longer days ahead.

High-definition images

Kavin Baron was discovered through the multibeam mapping system of the 10 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Okeanos Explorer ship. The ship's remotely operated vehicle was able to capture high-definition images of the volcano.

Most of the participating scientists work in exploration continental centers in islands and Seas. They are connected to the ship's live via satellite and high-speed Internet gateways, and can interact with shipboard personnel to guide the expedition.

The expedition found deserts, lobsters and a dense population of bamboo-like hydroids on bacteria that grows near volcanic vents.

In fact, Okeanos Explorer has mapped more than 6,000 square kilometers of the Philippine sea floor. With reporter Jhoeric Rodriguez, Agence France-Presse

Tycoon offers to buy Pagcor for $10B

From page A1

is going into gambling and I am going in this on my own. I do not intend to hold on this for long," he said.

In his first State of the Nation Address, Mr. Aquino revealed his strategy of public-private partnerships and selling or leasing government assets to raise money for the government grappling with a deficit likely to hit P300 billion this year.

Last month, Mr. Aquino announced that he was open to privatizing Pagcor after assessing its assets and earnings vs assets.

Spectacular deal

"The sale of Pagcor fits in well with the President's agenda. Mr. are not asking him for anything but he true to his campaign promise of ensuring a level playing field for all businesses," Ang said.

"Why wait for six years to have $10 billion, you will get $20-25 billion in just six months? His government does not have to sell anything else and he will make the country a tiger economy immediately. Isn't this respects what deal?

Ang said that Pagcor would be worth at least P400 billion based on its 2009 gross income of P29.75 billion and the minimum 15 times premium value investors were willing to pay for a monopoly gambling business like Pagcor.

"It could go as high as 17 times premium compared to an average gambling firm which fetches an average premium of 10 times," he said.

Move to strengthen peso

With $10 billion in cash, Ang said the impact of Pagcor's privatization would be "stunning" not only on the government's cash position but also on the country's debt stock and economic standing in the region.

"Our peso-dollar market is so small that if we bring in $10 billion into the system, the peso-exchange rate will drop to between 38 and 39 pesos to one dollar. And at that exchange rate, we will save between P400 billion and P600 billion in principal and interest payments on our debt incurring that much peso gain in the exchange rate leads to P40 billion in savings in debt payments," Ang said.

"We will be a tiger economy we will jump ahead of Thailand," he said.

"If a private company will take over Pagcor, then P200-P300 billion income could easily go up to P50 billion. With profits like that, any group who wins Pagcor can run it around and sell 49 percent of the company through an initial public offering in the stock market and get back all its equity investment plus some profit," Ang said.

Best to oversee deal

Mr. Aquino is the best leader to oversee the sale of Pagcor because majority of the people trust him, Ang said, adding that the government will continue to regulate the agency in addressing concerns of civil society and church leaders about the evils of a gambling culture.

The 23-year-old Pagcor currently runs 13 casinos in 18 major cities in the country with 245 satellite casinos, 24 VIP Clubs and four Bingo branches.

Gary T. Gamboa, businessman Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco Jr. is his consultant to Asia Digital 12 years ago, Ang has steered the country's biggest food and beverage conglomerate into new big-ticket ventures such as power generation, energy property development, mining and telecommunications.

Ang reiterated that he would be contracted for proposing the sale of Pagcor and his plan to bid for it with a Malaysian group.

"So, what if they call me a Malaysian agent? The bottom line is: Will this deal be good for the country? I have been criticized as a mercenary in the building time I have joined in in the past years. I wanted to ensure that the government got the best price for the asset that it sells. What is lost, my goal is to give the government an honest bid for each project instead of just a select group controlling the bidding for these selves."

Pagcor stops money, fuel subsidies

By Marlon Ramos

$10 billion three bargain.

The days of Philippine Gaming Corp. (Pagcor) as cash cow may soon be over.

Pagcor chair Clarissa Magsaysay has temporarily cut off the financial aid lines called, thus amounting to millions of pesos that the state-run gambling firm had been providing to Manila police and barangay officials, spokesperson Jay Santiago said yesterday.

"Chairman Magsaysay wants to establish a more systematic system that before we release disbursements," Santiago said.

While the amount of the financial aid was not thus authorized, he said it could be up to millions of pesos.

According to Santiago, Magsaysay recently discovered that some individuals had been taking advantage of Pagcor's generosity in providing fuel to patrol cars of the Manila Police District and barangays now there would only be no limit.

In certain cases, the said purported barangay watchmen had asked Pagcor personnel manning their fuel depot to fill up extra plastic containers each time they got their monthly allocation.

Prone to abuse

"The current setup is really prone to abuse," Santiago stated, adding that Pagcor had been spending nearly P5 million a month for its fuel subsidies.

Pagcor, he said, had also been paying the water and electric bills of some barangays halls and health centers in Manila and other places hosting its gaming facilities.

"If the funds will really help in intended beneficiaries, we see no reason why we

shouldn't give them financial grants. But the disbursement should be reasonable," Santiago maintained.

He said Pagcor had likewise been hurting the bill for the streetlights along the controversial Boardside Municipal Boulevard in Pasay City that the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority should shoulder.

Last month, Magsaysay threatened to attempt by a former Pagcor employee to cash a check worth over P21 million reportedly meant to pay for the humongous grid of cameras deployed in nine areas in Metro Manila.

Rice donation

Magsaysay's office also reviewed information that nearly 40 metric tons of rice donated to Pagcor were used for the candidacies of the son of its former chair, Ulysses Grenzon.

Grenzon has vehemently denied the allegations, saying the 200-MT rice shipment was actually donated to him by Jesse Corp., a Japanese investor in the proposed Pagcor Entertainment City.

To avoid similar questionable transactions, Magsaysay ordered Pagcor's logistics unit to devise a transparent system of releasing financial assistance, Santiago said.

He noted that most of Pagcor's previous disbursements were only entered through its former communications head, Edwin "Dodie" King, and were not covered by liquidation reports.

"We are reviewing all documents, pertaining to allegations of anomalous deals. We cannot disclose all of them at the moment," Santiago said.

New casino franchises suspended

From page A1

Ultimately, there are no discussions yet on the privatization of Pagcor. The suspension is only to ensure that any licensees to be issued will have some revised basis," Santiago told The Inquirer over the phone.

New guidelines

Under the previous Pagcor leadership, Santiago noted "a certain degree of arbitrariness" in the licensing process.

"Pagcor is currently preparing rules of procedures and guidelines that will govern new licenses as well as renewals," he said.

Mr. Aquino has expressed alarm over the proliferation of casinos even as some authority has granted tourist destinations. He has also raised the possibility of privatizing Pagcor, which is mandated to operate and regulate casinos.

Casino operators whose contracts are due to expire within the coming months are covered by Magsaysay's directive, according to Santiago.

"These up for renewal would be carefully reviewed. We will impose the requirement that their operations should be in tourist destinations only," he said.

Relocation plans

While there are no regulations barring Filipinos from casinos, hearings said gambling establishments were primarily meant to entice foreign patrons.

"Of course, the government wants to maximize its control over this kind of entertainment for the salaries and foreigners," he said.

Gaming facilities in areas visited by low tourists would be asked to relocate, he said.

The operations of "e-games hubs," or gaming stalls offering online casinos and electronic gaming, would also be evaluated.

Since its creation in 1977, Pagcor has become as a stable source of revenues for the government, funding various civic projects of the Office of the President and other agencies.

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

OPINION

Questioning Luisita

EDITORIAL

THE PROPOSED compromise agreement offered by Hacienda Luisita Inc., or HLI, giving the farmers of the country's most controversial sugar estate a choice between owning shares of stock in the company or accepting land outright, raises more questions than it provides answers. The most important question is truly bittersweet: Does the powerful Cojuangco clan, majority owners of the fantastic sprawling estate in Tarlac, believe in agrarian reform?

The centerpiece program of the Cojuangco Aquino presidency, agrarian reform has been amateurishly applied to Luisita. In large part, the lack of success can be attributed to the Cojuangco family's decision to use the so-called Stock Distribution Option, or SDO, to comply with the objectives of agrarian reform. Simply put, the SDO gives farmers an equity stake in the company that owns the land they till, instead of a parcel of the divided and redistributed land.

As lawyer and civil society leader Christian Monsod has pointed out, however, Luisita's SDO was itself an attempt to escape the consequences of an earlier court ruling. That, many of the questions that greeted the compromise agreement have to do with timing. In the compromise agreements surely another clever ploy to delay or preempt or influence a Supreme Court decision?

To be sure, none of the parties who signed the proposed agreement have so much as hinted at bypassing the Supreme Court, which is scheduled to hear oral arguments on Aug. 18 on the Luisita case currently pending before it. But a delay is entirely conceivable, especially if the conclusions of the proposed agreement and the powers by which a majority of farmers opted to remain the SDO are to be appropriately vetted.

There are questions, too, about that very process. Even if insensitive accusations by militant leftist organizations that Luisita farmers voted under a climate of true terror proves to be only speculative (and this is still not the case), it is still worth asking: What was the process that allowed the farmers to vote by margins that surprised even the most optimistic estate spokesmen?

The conclusion too garnered their own share of questions. To highlight only the most troubling: Why did the option for land distribution limit itself only to about a third of the entire estate, when the mandate of agrarian reform requires that all lands covered by the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program should be redistributed? The idea, already suggested by estate spokesmen, that the one-third limit corresponds to the 30 percent farmers' share of HLI equity does not hold water, and should easily be debunked in any legal proceeding.

And then there is the Hacienda question. Even though President Aquino himself owns only a miniscule portion of the estate, and even if he has taken a "broad stroke" approach to any negotiation (that is to say, he has not been involved, but has only been advised on the general picture), are proposed settlement will still, by default, carry his imprimatur. He is, after all, the head of the family now. He had spoken on the campaign trail about achieving a final resolution of the Luisita problem, and has done damage control after a exuding of his vigorously denied any suggestion that the family diverts themselves of Luisita—any sentiment cannot but be seen as having his approval. Even if he has zero input on the discussions, that is the reality he faces. Does he "value one" for the family, or does he heal his family to do what is right?

The fundamental question, then, is a dagger aimed at the heart of the presidential legacy that will be left behind by the two Aquinos in Malacañang: Do the Cojuangcos who own Luisita mean to follow the objectives of agrarian reform?

The promise of CARP is found in the promise of the 1987 Constitution: let farmers to own the "Capable" lands they till, and for the landowners to receive compensation in return. "Now," Monsod says, "it's a world turned upside down with the landowners getting the land and farmers getting the compensation. If you know economic and political power concentrated, you can turn the world on its head."

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What will P-Noy do about officials' huge pay?

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

EVEN THE congressmen, already mired in the multimillion-peso pork barrel funds that they collect each year, were shocked at the millions of pesos that officials of government-owned or -controlled corporations have given themselves. Highest paid is Bristol Myers, administrator of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority (SBMA). Ironically, SBMA under Anne Kristine was involved in the biggest number of scandals among the government corporations. To many only the most notorious. The attempt to race, under false pretenses, a tourist airline (SBMA); the construction of high-rise residences for a known firm within a flight forest; and recently, the grant of the right to operate around Subic gave to one company at the expense of the casino conglomerate who still have existing contracts with SBMA.

Another great income of almost P20.4 million a year is almost double that of the second highest paid official, Banguo Rimfort of the neighboring Clark Development Corp. (CDC), whose pay is more than P10.5 million. In comparison, the salary of President Aquino, the richest Hacienda Luisita, is only P85,000 a month before taxes, or about P1.2 million per year, including 13th month pay.

The list of highest-paid Philippine government officials was compiled by the Commission on Audit. (To see know how much other officials of government corporations are receiving, see the list printed on the front page of the August 2 issue of the Inquirer.)

How did this happen? Don't be part of the chief of a government corporation a move then double that of his boss, the President of the Philippines? Because while the salary of the President is fixed by law, the pay of members of the boards of directors of government corporations, which include various allowances and bonuses, are authorized by the directors themselves. And there are no legal limits to how much they can give themselves. The limit is only how much their "bayi" or cronies or consumers can bear. And since, as the masses often say, most government officials are "walang hiya" (no shame), there is practically no limit.

These gargantuan pay scales are so much in a country where the people are groaning in poverty, the government has a gargantuan budget deficit and a gargantuan foreign debt.

This alone has got to be stopped. The officials will not tempt their own good volunteer by forsaking or somebody has to stop them. Unless a law or an order from President Aquino instructs steps them, this abuse will continue.

In defense of himself, Bristol said his monthly salary was P233,000 a month—still a take home pay of P85,000. Even so, it is still bigger than the take-home pay of the President of the Philippines, whose job and responsibilities are a thousand and one times more difficult than those of Arroyo. Besides, what has Arroyo and his dire handiwork) compensated directors done for all that money? What have been their positive achievements? Nothing. On the contrary, some boosters have left, and newer investors and cargo handlers are complaining.

The situation is the same in the Aquino and his directors are still in table. Even if they are not among the outright appointments entitled by President Aquino (but aren't they co-nominees with SBMA?), they should have been fired for incompetence, inefficiency and, probably, graft and corruption.

Even then, Arroyo and Roxanne are not the only officials who are overly compensated. There are 10 other officials of government corporations in the 100 list, and they do not include the other directors of the government corporations who are equally generously paid in the midst of hunger in the Philippines. Do you think they should be left behind whose they are the same who propose and approve the gargantuan pay scales? Also, the amounts do not include the non-cash benefits they have accorded them, selves, such as free luxury vehicles, free gas and repairs, the salaries of their contingents of bodyguards, drivers and aides, signing privileges in 5-star hotels and restaurants and allowances for foreign and domestic travel.

The abuse is true not only in government corporations but also in Congress, some local government units and, would you believe, also in some barangay councils.

One frustrated lawyer who drafted one first Constitution foresees other human errors such as good will do to benefit themselves since you allow them unlimited power. So they put in one very first Constitution a prohibition for members of Congress from increasing their own salaries. But how it to the patronage to look for loopholes.

They got around the prohibition by giving themselves various allowances which they pocketed.

Not content with that, they inserted the pork barrel. These are the funds in the budget set aside for the projects of members of Congress. They have now even consulting centers like Countrywide Development Fund (CDF) and Priority Development Assistance Fund (PDAF). They are commonly for projects identified by legislators but half of the money is kicked back to congressmen as "commissions."

Following this bad example set by the members of Congress, the councilors of Quezon City have given themselves their own pork barrel of several million pesos a year for each councilor. That is nevertheless, some barangay councilors also gave their members their own pork barrel.

As President Aquino, the situation is growing from bad to worse. You have to do something to stop this decay.

For the record

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

THE HEARD recently that I've been nominated as a bar blogs and article that suggest I might have missed beyond the bounds of journalism in endorsing Marissa Aquino during the elections. I couldn't wouldn't mind it. People are entitled to their opinions. But given that it concerns the integrity of the profession I've embraced for more than 25 years now, which is saying something—I hope "There's the Rub" way back in 1987 in the Daily Globe—I feel I have to set the record straight.

One, did I campaign for Aquino?

Two, did I campaign for her by campaign. I've always been clear about what I was campaigning for. That was not for someone to run in an election, that was someone to wage a liberation. For close to a decade, we had been ruled despotically by someone who never got voted into power, who until it happened looked nowhere headed to give up power. But Cory died, and gave birth to Kenneth, in more ways than one.

The elections were incidental, the liberation was essential. That is the reason I kept saying what we had won on Edsa transpired up at an election. If the election had not been around the corner, I was told count on the doctor that gathered during Cory's funeral march would have broken into a full-house public uprising, like the last two times. My contention was the house can be for "Negosyo" elections." Why would someone who never figured massively among the "pamahalaan" suddenly have overwhelming backers? Quite simply because the public did not see him as an ordinary candidate joining an ordinary election. The public saw him as an ordinary hero—and vulnerable. Pendo Aquino and the Lone Ranger, to underscore the morally magical aspect of it—undertaking an extraordinary project.

From the start, my advice to the Aquino camp was to not—to not—turn the campaign into a mere electoral one. The people knew so much more than the people expected much, much more than that. I told the candidate was merely like the soap electorate of 1986: Cory didn't fight to become president. I just want I interested.

Two, did I have a vested interest in the campaign?

I will say no, depends on what you mean by vested interest. Vested interested is flashy cars and drugs. It means being paid by the campaign, handling money for the campaign, being a spokesman for the campaign, being a position in the party running the campaign, getting a position in government after the campaign, expecting to get a position in government after the campaign. But I do say of those?

I have no problems with being partisan. I have problems with being partisan for gain. Saying it's OK to be paid because you believe in a cause anyway is self-deluding. If it all people who get into politics have to delude themselves. You'll end up being incoherent, half-hearted, self-indulging or self-censoring. The test of the pudding is in the eating, and the axe thing about column writing is that the pudding is there for the eating. On the proof of what you are all about is plain to see, in all its untied glory or unmentionable.

I have yet to know where in my columns I deviated from my original proposition that the elections were an Edsa masquerading as an election, that it was from the very start about People Power and should be for the vote and about People Power. Or where I hesitated to criticize, upbraid, quarrel with those I deemed to have misconstrued it, or are misleading it.

I've always thought people in media who took partisan positions particularly in elections, unsupportable or otherwise, should agree not to write columns to proclaim it afterward. Because however you justify it, it will always look like dishonest payment, in kind, if not in cash, in which if not in CDF. But that's just me. I know others to their sense of propriety.

This is not how the wars I see my writers from and possible. Under Ninoy Aquino's, I will not say I will be the judge of that. There are my readers and my employers to do that. But I don't think so even again given half the chance.

You bet I would.

A history of commissions; a note on PAL

SOUNDING BOARD

Fr. Joaquin G. Bernas, S.J.

FIRST THERE was the Feliciano Commission charged with the responsibility of looking into the failed coups of 1989. It was created by President Aquino. Sensing perhaps that there was some legal defense in the situation, Congress passed RA 6832 re-creating the Commission.

Next was the Nachura Commission created by President Estrada to study and recommend possible changes to the Constitution. It was challenged in Court but the challenge came too late—after the Commission had made its report. Moreover, the Court ruled that the challenger had no standing to raise the issue of validity as a taxpayer. Commission saved!

Then followed the Feliciano Commission to look into the truth behind the Oakwood mutiny. It was headed by former Justice Feliciano and I was one of the members.

The Melo Commission came next to investigate extrajudicial killings. It was headed by former Justice Jose Melo and assisted by top PNP officials.

Both the Feliciano Commission and the Melo Commission were created by President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo. To my recollection, nobody with appropriate standing challenged the validity of the two commissions before the Court.

Now we have the second Davide Commission but I see no reliable act coming up to bolster it. Meanwhile it is being challenged by allies of former President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo who had created her own challenged commission.

One question that arises is whether under my author of powers the President can create offices. It is true that the matter be brought to the Supreme Court in a manner that will not be dismissive on the technicality of lack of "standing." As the measure I cannot yet identify anyone who would have standing to challenge it.

* * *

TAKEOVER PAL OPERATIONS? In the face of the **unfolding of two documentaries from PAL, government started thinking about what it could do.** A senator expressed the view that a takeover of PAL operations was possible under the Constitution. However was also mentioned by the secretary of justice as a possible last resort but the Malacañang spokesperson was quoted to say that was not thinking takeover thoughts. Poor both Malacañang and PAL seem to have decided to keep their hands off PAL. But let us talk about takeover in the Constitution.

There are two ways in which the state can intervene in the operations of a public utility. The more natural mode is found in Article III, Section 10, which says: "The State may, in the interest of national welfare or defense, establish and operate vital industries and, upon payment of just compensation, transfer to private ownership utilities and other enterprises owned by the government." In the Government's eminent domain, in other words.

One key obstacle to resort to this mode of takeover is the requirement of "payment of just compensation." The state becomes the owner of the public utility but only after payment of just compensation. Second jurisprudence has emphasized that compensation is just when it is given promptly. This should present a big problem to a cash-strapped government especially if its spokesmen will also have to help fashion compensation (Is Ayala Land for the sugar lands. Moreover, it was not too long ago that the government was sued and declared off limits problems by presenting it. Depreciation must be factored from the initial of government now.

A subtler mode of takeover is the assumption of responsibility for the operation of the public utility but without assuming ownership. This is the police power mode authorized in Article III, Section 17: "In times of national emergency, when the public interest so requires, the State may, during the emergency and under reasonable terms prescribed by it, temporarily take over or direct the operation of any privately owned public utility or business affected with public interest."

Last 2008 the Supreme Court said a mouthful about this power when President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, confronted by what she saw as a series of offenses among the political opposition, the administration of the extreme left represented by the Left Militant, and the extreme right represented by military adventurism, declared a state of emergency and threatened to take over the operation of certain public utilities. To her credit, she never did.

Probably it was because of the long sentence delivered by the Supreme Court explaining the meaning of Article III, Section 17 and saying:

In brief, the Court said: "Section 17, Article III must be understood as an aspect of the emergency powers clause. The taking over of private business affected with public interest is just another facet of the emergency powers generally reposed upon Congress. Thus, when Section 17 states that 'the State may, during the emergency and under reasonable terms prescribed by it, temporarily take over or direct the operation of any privately owned public utility or business affected with public interest,' it refers to Congress, not the President. Now, whether or not the President may exercise such power is dependent on whether Congress may grant it. It is for pursuant to a law prescribing the reasonable terms thereof."

The "emergency powers clause" the Court is referring to is the clause which authorizes Congress to grant emergency powers to the President "in times of war or other national emergency." What is probably obvious is that Congress does not now see the PAL controversy as a problem approximating the severity of war or a similar national emergency serious enough to justify the grant of emergency powers to the President.

Upretti's ump

KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO

Antonio J. Montalvan II

MOST OF calling for a constitutional change that may be equated with a similar move of a former president when she filed her first bill to supposedly amend the 1987 Constitution. Another story is calling for the legalization of abortion in the Philippines. Not unlike the former president's line of death, doing so only to accommodate to American agenda may not sit well with the Filipino public at this time. And so Congress has certainly their hands full in constitutional change, but it suffer a mistaken association.

The lobby money in Congress for "reproductive rights" has always been fueled by greenbacks. One advocate testified at one hearing that she was born to embrace abortion and reproductive rights though it were the fifth or Ruby Rose of the world. It is a selective form of advocacy that sees our relative sense of morality about contraception and abortion that, as begin with, cannot be treated with a superficial modern approach.

"Freedom of choice" begins by saying that the "Centers for Reproductive Rights says the law to advance reproductive freedom as a fundamental human right that all governments are legally obligated to protect, respect and fulfill." There is a reason there that needs to be exposed. "Fundamental human rights" does not have the same meaning in the Philippine interpretation that all states must adhere to. There certainly exist fine distinctions that may be culturally bound and that may be specific to individual nations. Hence, "reproductive rights" is a misleading term that is specific to the United States. Moreover, it is a term that is not universally accepted by international law. Even the United Nations Human Rights Council has not yet recognized abortion as a human right.

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"Freedom of choice" begins by saying that the "Centers for Reproductive Rights says the law to advance reproductive freedom as a fundamental human right that all governments are legally obligated to protect, respect and fulfill." There is a reason there that needs to be exposed. "Fundamental human rights" does not have the same meaning in the Philippine interpretation that all states must adhere to. There certainly exist fine distinctions that may be culturally bound and that may be specific to individual nations. Hence, "reproductive rights" is a misleading term that is specific to the United States. Moreover, it is a term that is not universally accepted by international law. Even the United Nations Human Rights Council has not yet recognized abortion as a human right.

Unlike the US, our country still has the stamps of a set of norms that is able to recognize the moral superiority of term around provisionality "Freedom Lines" does not say anything of that but, and is totally silent on the participation of twin in the attempt to terminate life. Moreover, the lobbyists are carelessly ignorant of the limited fetal code. These proper norms are the ones that keep us away from such American imperialist imposition from Melissa Upretti and her ilk.

Other statements purport an unrealistic view: "Unwanted births are a direct result of government failure." Whatever! Unwanted births are the consequence of irresponsible sex. But it has made it extremely unsafe, leading directly to the preventable death of thousands of women each year. In practical terms, children have inevitably lost their mothers, husbands have lost their wives, and parents have lost their daughters." That is a blatant statement, indeed misleading one. When it comes preventable deaths? According to "Freedom Lines," even normal pregnancies are not risk-free.

Freedom's recommendations are an interesting litany of commands that deserves an over-the-rope look. Here's a sampling: Among the statements is one, "The United States Department of State should: Address unsafe abortion morbidity as part of the State Department's commitments to the reduction of maternal mortality worldwide." Why should a sovereign state's foreign affairs department impose upon other sovereign states? I thought we are done with the concept of having a policeman for the world?

Who are those being cooted as Melissa Upretti's "local partners"? No identities were given. Are they afraid of the law as they say women who have undergone abortion are, or do they know only too well the unsafe practices of many Filipinos that even Upretti does not know?

(Comments to mondalvan_antonio@yahoo.com)

Ninoy Aquino and Sonny Trillanes

LAST FRIDAY, Aug. 6, Sen. Antonio "Sonny" Trillanes marked his 39th birthday. He had seven years have been spent in prison on charges that the average citizen would find difficult to understand and appreciate, considering that his so-conspirators-in-rebellion or mere-by-stares have already been pardoned or released on bail. He continues to stand by his "not guilty" plea. Other Oakwood colleagues who also did not change their plea from "not guilty" to "guilty" have been allowed bail and temporary freedom. Trillanes is the only one left in prison.

REVEILLE

Ramon J. Farolan

One reason for the harsh "no bail" stance is that Trillanes is facing charges of a non-bailable nature. But only last Thursday, the Supreme Court ruled the case of Enrique del Rosario Jr., Rolyn Ecleo Jr., Jr. His case involving particide is non-bailable, but for "humanitarian reasons" he has been allowed to participate in work sessions and attend congressional sessions.

Has Manuel del Rosario killed more people than Trillanes? Has Manuel del Rosario committed more crimes against the government in 1974 and 2001. Manuel was facing charges for rebellion, a non-bailable offense. Yet he was allowed to post bail for his constitutional release, and later placed under house arrest. Where is he now?

Trillanes was not allowed to attend the opening session of Congress and he has been given permission, either, to attend Senate sessions in person. The reason being given for such stringent measures is that he is a high-risk detainee who might try to escape.

I have to agree with the reader to figure out why an individual who marches down Makati Avenue to the Peninsula Hotel to full view of security forces should be a high-risk prisoner. Nevertheless, perhaps some kind of non-cage can be built, sized out to ensure that participation in Senate meetings will not result in his escaping from the Senate hall. There is some hundredth-degree reading forms for greater security.

Incidentally, last Friday Trillanes was allowed liberty from the Camp Crame Custodial Center not just to cuddle him to mark his birthday with family members but also to wander the ashes of his third son who died while Trillanes was in captivity, from their home to the Antipolo Cathedral.

During seven years in prison, Trillanes has been allowed temporary liberty on only a few occasions; this was one of them.

* * *

Somehow I am reminded that two weeks from today on Aug. 21, we shall mark the assassination of Sen. Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino Jr. father of President Noynoy Aquino.

It is not my purpose to suggest that Sonny Trillanes is to the model of a Ninoy Aquino. They came from different domains of our society and their backgrounds are completely dissimilar. Ninoy came from one of the elite families of the nation, while Sonny with middle class roots to the rest of a military officer. He was one of my students at the Philippine Military Academy. Ninoy himself graduated from PMA Class of 1953.

But there are some core similarities in the treatment of both men in their public careers.

Ninoy Aquino, at age 30, was the youngest elected senator of the Republic in the 1967, the only Liberal Party candidate to survive the landslide victory of the Nacionalista Party during that particular election year.

Sonny Trillanes was elected to the Senate in 2007, just two months short of his 36th birthday. He remains one of our youngest senators. He was elected while in detention, under the campaign and working with very limited resources. Yet he won by over 11 million votes, coming in no. 11 in the nationwide victory line-up, beating administration gubernatorial candidate Mike Defensor, Ralph Recto, Miguel Zubiri and Prospero Pichay. Perhaps, that may be one reason why some people are not too keen in seeing him at the Senate. He would be a constant reminder of how people are bent on a better alternative to the administration candidates.

In September 1972, on the declaration of martial law, Ninoy was arrested on charges of murder, illegal possession of firearms and subversion. Tried by a military commission, headed by Maj. Gen. Jose Syjuco, he was found guilty on all charges and sentenced to death by firing squad.

On July 1, 1973, Ninoy was brought to trial before yet another military commission, headed by Brig. Gen. Luis Morfe, and convicted and sentenced, took over the Oakwood apartment complex. They surrendered only after being promised military peace. Instead, Trillanes ended up facing trial in a civilian court. To this date, no one has publicly disputed the report of the late Max Soliven on the nationalist antigovernment elements' government negotiators pledged trial by court martial for the mutineers.

Ninoy Aquino spent seven years and seven months in prison, often in solitary confinement, with very few communications allowed. In addition, he also spent three years in exile in the United States.

Senator Trillanes has spent seven years and two months in prison, with very few outside visits allowed.

Two duly elected senators of the Republic, each one spending more than seven years in prison. When President Ninoy publicly declared that "Trillanes may have been a victim of injustice," I think that deep in his heart, he realized that subsequently he would be the one being paid his debt to society with seven years of his life. And I believe that in his own time, he will do what is right to correct an injustice.

* * *

In his bestseller, "The Audacity of Hope," then Freshman Senator Barack Obama narrates his courtesy call on Sen. Robert Byrd, who was then the longest serving US senator, and so to his death last June, was the longest serving member of the US Congress with 58 years of service.

After the courtesies, Byrd gifted Obama with a set of beautifully bound books on Senate history which he himself wrote. Obama told him how considerate it was that he had found the time to write. "Oh, I have been a fortunate man," said Byrd, "a thankful for," replied Byrd. Suddenly he paused and looked squarely at Obama, "I only have one regret, you know. The foolishness of youth..." (I believe Byrd was referring to his membership in the Ku Klux Klan in his younger days.)

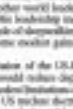
There was silence as finally broken by Obama saying, "We all have regrets. We just ask that in the end God's grace shines upon us."

Years from today, Sonny Trillanes will look back on the Oakwood mutiny as an expression of the idealism of his youth. We all make mistakes, especially young people wishing nothing better for their country and people. We certainly hope that in the end God's grace and mercy shines upon them.

Taking nuclear disarmament seriously

WORLD VIEW

Gareth Evans



MELBOURNE—PEOPLE sometimes forget that the boy who cried wolf ended up being eaten. This, indeed, has been killed by a nuclear weapon since the attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, 65 years ago this month. And, with Cold War tensions long past, it is all too easy for policymakers and politicians to relax about nonproliferation, be complacent about the threats that those weapons continue to pose and to regard attempts to eliminate them, or contain their spread, as well meaning but futile.

But the truth is that it is sheer dumb luck—not any conscious, agreed or enforceable management—that anything substantially stable about the world's nuclear weapon systems—that has let us survive so long without a catastrophic. With 23,000 nuclear weapons (equivalent to 150,000 Hiroshimas) still in existence, more than 2,000 of them actively deployed, and more than 2,000 still on dangerously high launch-on-warning alert, we cannot assume that our luck will hold indefinitely.

We know now—with multiple revelations about human error and system breakdown on both the American and Russian sides during the Cold War that the risk of accidental or unauthorized use of command and control systems are not hedged. We know that none of the newer nuclear-armed states ever with security much less sophisticated than those, and we know that, across the spectrum of sophistication, the risk of destabilizing cyber attack beating cyber defense is getting ever higher.

So it should be obvious that the status quo in relation to ops is intolerable. Moreover, there is the real risk of proliferation, especially in the Middle East, multiplying the dangers that nuclear weapons will be used by accident or miscalculation as well as design.

There is also the sometimes exaggerated but unquestionably non-negligible risk of non-state terrorist actors getting their hands on insufficiently secured weapons or fissile material and exploding a bomb in a major population center. And there is the disconcerting prospect that new still under-sovereign powers will insist on building uranium enrichment or plutonium reprocessing plants of their own, rightly also worried at "breakout risk."

President Barack Obama came to office alert to all these threats and determined, as no other US president, and almost no other world leader, has been, to eliminate them. His leadership inspired hope that more than a decade of sleepwalking was behind us, and brought some modest gains over the last 18 months.

They include the conclusion of the US-Russia new START treaty, which would reduce deployed strategic weapons; some modest limitations on the role of nuclear weapons in US nuclear doctrine; a US commitment to the ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty; the standard setting agreement on the implementation of improved nuclear security measures; and hard-to-achieve consensus at the recently concluded preparatory Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference on useful steps forward, including a 2012 conference on establishing a nuclear weapons free zone in the Middle East.

But START treaty ratification is going nowhere fast in the US Senate and progress on other key issues from Iran down or clunky. Bringing the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty into force; starting negotiations on a new treaty to ban the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons; developing the non-proliferation regime with effective measures to deter violations; and deter treaty withdrawals; reaching agreement on some form of international management of the most sensitive aspects of the fuel cycle; and, above all, starting new rounds of serious disarmament talks, involving not just the two nuclear superpowers, but all eight nuclear-armed states.

Arms control and disarmament is a grinding, unglamorous business that brings few quick successes. With domestic politics and so-called real-world issues dominating most political agendas, it seldom will convey its commitments to many. If that is to be avoided, continued leadership from the top—above all from Obama and Russian President Dmitri Medvedev—will be indispensable. But there is also a huge role for civil society actors, nongovernmental organizations and leaders, as well as civil society organizations, can make.

The most immediately important task is for those with credible voices to take every opportunity to try to bridge the complacency gap. The language must be stark: nuclear weapons are not only the most indiscriminately destructive weapons ever invented, but the only ones capable of destroying life on this planet as we know it. Carbon dioxide can also kill us, but not as quickly as bombs.

The second major task is to set ambitious global disarmament goals and to develop practical strategies and milestones. It is probably too difficult right now to set a reliable target date for getting all the way to "global zero"; there are still too many difficult technical problems of verification and enforcement to be resolved through, as well as the obvious political and psychological ones. But it is not unrealistic to aim for, like 2020 as a target for minimizing the world's nuclear arsenal to less than 10 percent of its current size. Nor is it too early to begin work on crafting a new Nuclear Weapons Convention that provides a workable framework for multilateral negotiations. Project Syndicate

Gareth Evans, a former foreign minister of Australia and president emeritus of the International Crisis Group, is co-chair of the International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament.

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Treason-based corruption

THE AQUINO administration, it is now clear after the State of the Nation Address, really believes in several campaign slogans—to no surprises, no poverty—and is prepared to pursue it.

But former President Erap Estrada has a point: there were graver corruption cases during the Arroyo regime than what President Aquino's team exposed. Former President Fidel V. Ramos' observation is also relevant: the focus did not define a road map out of poverty.

However, what the Ramos and Estrada and post-Philippine parochialism—except Teddy Quiazon, Ramon Magsaysay and Gabriela Silang—failed to focus on the economic cause of mass poverty in the Philippines: western-based corruption, specifically the blind acceptance of the debt conditions imposed by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund on the Philippine economy. Basically these conditions have been and still are liberalization, deregulation, privatization and level playing field. Trapped in this economic paradigm, no Third World country can make a breakthrough without resorting to extraordinary measures. It is like getting someone against a tiger.

President Diosdado Macapagal and Garcia are excluded because during their time, the decade of the 1950s, they adopted and pursued an import-substitution strategy of development which, especially during the Garcia regime and under the influence of the aforementioned few, Claro M. Recto, became the "Filipino First" industrialization policy. This policy developed in our country when the World Bank then used as the successful export strategy of the East Asian countries in their zero tariff or Japan's Trade Act the protection of import and exchange controls, hundreds of Filipino-owned factories, led by Filipino integrated Steel Mill and PHESI, emerged all over the country. That economy which could have entered industrialization in the country was replaced by President Diosdado Macapagal who, upon the advice of the IMF-IBRD, initiated devaluation and devaluation in 1962.

Among the measures which have effected a breakthrough are: South Korea, Taiwan, Malaysia, Thailand, Brazil and Argentina. NO the Philippines during F. Ver's non-corruption regime under 6th to 9th, if in the light against graft and corruption, is the under-current-driven law of economics like the privatization of the National Power Corp. and the deregulation of the oil industry.

—ARMANDO GUY INCIONG,
Unit 2002 Salem Square Condo.,
143 Tilak Avenue, Cubao, QC

LETTERS

No GSIS pension since July 2001

THIS IS in reference to the letter of Ms Marivilen Bicoro titled "SSS giving claimants the runaround." (Inquirer, 7/26/10)

Bicoro said her husband Pedro suffered "very severe coronary hypertension" which caused his retirement on March 15, 2001 and eventual death on Dec. 21, 2004.

She said: "On July 12, 2004 on the basis of his being hypertensive, (Mr.) Bicoro applied for disability income benefits."

SSS promptly paid monthly benefits after her husband died in 2004, she said, but it "forgot to deny the disability benefits to come date before and after its existence. The claim for the benefits of Bicoro is being given the unwarranted among the different SSS disbursements. In other words, up were fees passed, the claimant is dead and his claim is yet to be realized."

(It) struck do not show up up-

SSS: No disability benefit claim filed

dication for disability benefits "before and after retirement," contrary to what Ms Bicoro claimed in her letter.

Members are entitled to only one type of benefit at a given time. It was unlikely for Ms Bicoro to be subsidized by disability benefits in 2004 because he received retirement benefits from 2001.

Ellen Ma Ellaine inquired about the matter in 2008. SSS told her that a claim for Mr. Bicoro's disability was not feasible. Ms Ellaine was already up with her retirement benefits at the time. Members also go through a physical exam, in order to determine the extent of disability and the commensurate amount of benefits, which is a requirement for Mr. Bicoro could no longer fulfill.

—ROLLY PALACIOS,
assistant vice president,
Media Affairs Department,
Social Security System

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BDO

Untouchable Japanese?

ARE DIPLOMATS exempt from obeying traffic rules in Japan?

I am directing this question to the Department of Foreign Affairs because of an unfortunate incident I witnessed recently when I came out leaving the Japanese Bay on five hand-up vehicle ignored traffic rules to get ahead of everybody else on the road.

On Aug. 3, at about 2:45 p.m., I was driving along the Ginza Mall (driver's going toward Quezon Avenue, when a black Lexus with a Japanese flag exempt/flowed along the same direction and cut in front of my vehicle. I blew my car horn to alert the driver to avoid hitting my car. The bodyguard in the back-up vehicle, a Toyota Fortuner with diplomatic plate 2005, rolled down his window and glared at me. He signaled me to stop and I stopped my horn. I followed. It was at that point that I thought a Japanese official or diplomat must be in the Lexus.

The convoy got stuck in front of my car for some two to three minutes because traffic was heavy along Quezon Avenue. When the convoy was able to move, the Fortuner swerved to and cut to push other vehicles out of the way in order for the convoy to go ahead.

The other vehicles had no recourse but to swerve out of the lanes and Fortuner's way.

Apparently the convoy was part of Quezon Avenue and Agham Road area because the two vehicles beat the red light line, just the same, they got stuck in the middle of the road because of the heavy traffic.

If President Aquino follows simple traffic rules, why can't the Japanese obey and follow order to avoid Chaos to allow to use the official and to the Lexus being escorted by the Fortuner should be one treated by the DFA for driving in violation of the driver's rights and for by subverting his driver's and bodyguards' orderly behavior in the streets.

—OSCAR BOOTS, o.s. (Lexus) ultra.com

On those '20 push-ups'

PRESIDENT AXE 20 adopted referred to the 20 push-ups that their AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Ruben S. Ramos ordered for the 400 soldiers who took over the Manila Hotel in July 1986" and ended in a walkout of hotel guests.

Despite the availability of adequate television instruction and ample time to verify the facts, many people's information on the issue remains superficial and in some cases, incorrect. Please allow me to clarify the following:

1. The decision not to hold the Manila Hotel three participants holds was not made by Gen. Ramos, it was President Cory Aquino who issued on July 1, 1986 an addendum to the orders "Executive orders 24 hours. No cancel changes will be filed of surrender is effected within this time limit." This decision was arrived at after the President's consultations with and upon the recommendation of Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile (who) recommended a 72-hour time frame, but the company president's decision prevail.)

2. After the President's ultimatum, former Defense Minister Enrile initiated negotiating with government representatives in the Army and Navy Club, after which, nothing else done was a box-office, they did not even bother to return to the Manila Hotel.

3. On July 6, 1986, at the Bonifacio Army gymnasium, Minister Enrile and General Ramos accepted the surrender of Manila hotel troops. Enrile said, "We are not going to humiliate, punish or embarrass any one of you." I was present on the scene at the point of granting permission to serve in a due order we have promised you will be fulfilled. There will be no retaliation against you. We shall consider this as past."

General Ramos then ordered the troops present to "Fall out, Fall down" and the military's one morning exercise consisting of sets of "push-ups" "squat jumps," etc.), and jumped them. When a media reporter asked what it was all about, Lt. Col. Lance Corpuz of the AFP Civil Relations Service, who was present during the proceedings, explained that General Ramos gave the order not as punishment to the surrenderees, but to defuse the tension in the highly charged atmosphere and to allow the soldiers to build rules to take their fingers off the triggers and lay down their high-powered firearms—and it worked. One wrong move from either side could have caused the volatile situation into a bloody confrontation.

The foregoing details were verified by the Manila Hotel Employees Association (MHEA) (MHEA) in affidavit to its Vice-President. The same details were also narrated in "Democracy at Gunboat" a well-documented history book written by Col. Rex Gualberto San Juan (August 1987).

—HILA LIGUTAN, spokesman of Former President FIDEL V. Ramos

Assistant Editor Tony Hernandez

Across the NATION

1st torture case under P-Noy in Pampanga

By Tonette Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—The nongovernment Medical Action Group (MAG) began here on Sunday a forensic verification on what may be the first set of "medically documented" torture victims under the Aquino administration.

Due for filing at the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) today, the case of Lenrie Salas, Rodolfo Tala, Jose Ensiera, Daniel Navarro and Jerry Simbulan will be the first to use the Anti-Torture Act of 2009 (Republic Act No. 9745) that former President Macapagal-Arroyo signed into law last year, said MAG spokesperson Edelbin Hernandez.

The five men were detained at the Pampanga provincial jail after the Regional Trial Court Branch 46 issued a writ of amparo on Aug. 4 to former Sgts. Petronilo Bermudo, Hospicio police director; Cpl. Ernesto Bordeos, 703rd Infantry Brigade deputy commander; and Provincial Prosecutor Jose Mananzing.

The court issued the writ, the first in Pampanga based on court records, as the petitions of relatives who said they had not seen the five men for almost 10 hours since the police and army soldiers arrested them at 9:30 p.m. on Aug. 3.

Torture

The writ placed the five men and their lawyers under threat in the custody of the National Bureau of Investigation, said lawyer Ricardo Sagnip, who represented the relatives.

The five men were arrested on suspicion they were leaders and members of the communist group Rebolusyonaryong Hukbong Bayan, an allegation they denied. The government reported recovering several firearms from the men.

The MAG sent two doctors to examine them.

The men of torture have been separately documented by the human rights advocacy group Initiatives for International Dialogue (IID) and the Commission on Human Rights in fact-finding.

A medico-legal report prepared in Camp Olivas, the regional police headquarters, documented various degrees of bruises, scars and swelling on different parts of the bodies of the five men, especially on soles.

Salas said when he asked Supt. Hadgani Mubarak, commander of the police's provincial public safety company, to inspect their rights, the official reportedly replied: "Walang human rights sa amin (There is no such thing as human rights to us)."

"We would kill and bury every one of your contacts in the media and other groups," Salas quoted Mubarak as saying.

Mubarak denied maltreating Salas and his four companions.

"They might have gotten those [bruises and wounds] during our encounter," Mubarak told the inquirer.

He was referring to a clash in nearby Mexico town four days before the arrest of Salas' group. The five men, he said, were among the nine rebels who fled.

Asked why the relatives, lawyers and reporters had no access to the five men, he said: "We still had follow-up operations. We did not want to jeopardize them."

Writ of amparo

Mubarak said the writ of amparo had been rendered "moot and academic" because the five men had been presented on Aug. 4 to the provincial prosecutor for inquest proceedings.

He said the arrest was legitimate because it was covered by a warrant issued by judge who he did not name.

Salas told CHR investigators that during the supposed tortures, his interrogators tried to force him to admit to having committed several killings, including the murders of the brothers of Rangkis Jimenez ng Philippine Governor Antonio Tetangco Jr. and two others in June.

Salas, 28, is a musician-composer. Gomez and Bordador are coordinators with the Task Force Detainees of the Philippines who take on unrelated. have work.

Hernandez said making government forces accountable for torture has been difficult due to insufficient documentation.

She said the case of the five men were different because their relatives were able to seek immediate help from the CHR and the Edelbert CL.

Lanao Norte wants talks with MILF

TUBOD, LANAO DEL NORTE—Lanao del Norte province, which was ravaged during the 2008 attacks by Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) rebels, is striking for the resumption of peace talks with the rebel group.

Early this week, the provincial peace and order council passed a resolution asking President Aquino to order the immediate resumption of the negotiations.

Gov. Khalid Dimapuno said lasting peace could only be attained once an agreement had been signed between the government and the MILF.

In the resolution, the peace and order council said the talks "should resume without delay."

In the 2008 attacks, MILF rebels raided civilian communities after the government declared its signing of the memorandum of agreement on ancestral domain (MOA-AD).

About 60 people were killed in the attacks and thousands of others were displaced.

The Supreme Court later trashed the MOA-AD, which would have given the MILF a larger area of control, for being unconstitutional.

Dimapuno, who also chairs the peace and order council, said they were worrying that a delay in the peace negotiations could result in more violence.

Because of this, he said they decided to convene the peace and order council.

"Recently we have convened the provincial peace and order council purposely to prepare municipal governments, line agencies, the civil society, police forces and the Armed Forces here for the worst scenario," he said.

Col. Lee Cesamore Perez, commander of the Army's 603rd Infantry Brigade, said the military was also closely watching the movements of MILF rebels and other threat groups in the province and nearby Lanao del Sur.

Perez said the military could not let its guard down especially at this time, when the talks with the MILF had been suspended.

The MILF commander said that its troops were on a defensive position and would usher when provoked.

Michaelyn Iqbal, MILF peace negotiator, said they were hoping that the military would respect previous agreements especially on the cessation of hostilities.

"As far as the MILF is concerned, we are abiding by these agreements," he said. *Vhel Pilad, Inquirer Mindanao*

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An Open Letter to
President Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III

Stradcom fees, are they legal?

Our Dear President:

Insurance is very important in nation-building. It allows the government to empower its citizenry by giving them the means to protect themselves and their assets against unforeseen risks.

The Compulsory Third Party Liability (CTPL) insurance is required under the 1978 Insurance Code simply because owning a motor vehicle poses a major risk to the general public. The CTPL currently provides a P100,000 cover for every person who may die or get injured in a motor vehicle crash.

In years past, unscrupulous people who in one way or another are connected to the Land Transportation Office (LTO) have found a way to illegally profit from CTPL insurance. Reports of fake CTPL policies being sold at the LTO have circulated in newspapers. Although unproven, these reports have unfairly put the insurance industry in a bad light.

To address this, the Philippine Insurers and Reinsurers Association (PIRA), the umbrella organization of 85 non-life insurance companies, has created the Certificate of Cover Authentication Facility (COCAF). The COCAF makes sure every CTPL policy comes from a legitimate insurer and is sold only once.

In compliance to a Department of Finance (DOF) directive, the COCAF was recently upgraded to include the advance collection of taxes. Today, motorists are assured that the CTPL policies they're buying are authentic and tax-paid.

But private company Stradcom, the LTO's service provider and guardian of the LTO's database, has found a way to profit from all these. It has been charging a P50 "interconnectivity fee" for every CTPL policy sold. And it wants to increase this to P80 without any valid reason. It is even threatening to bar the COCAF system from connecting to the LTO database if the higher fee is not paid.

In behalf of the 5 million Filipino motorists, we would like to raise the following questions:

1. Is Stradcom authorized to collect fees from the LTO database which it doesn't own?

2. Does Stradcom have the legal authority to block the COCAF – a system that counters fake CTPLs and collect taxes – from connecting with the LTO database?

And 3. Is Stradcom's 10-year contract with the LTO which started in 2000 still valid?

The insurance industry is doing all it can to become responsible corporate citizens and is aiding the government where it could, and at its own expense. We, however, have to draw the line where and when our efforts become untenable.

We hope you can look into this irregular situation, Mr. President. Millions of motorists who register their vehicles at the LTO will be very grateful if you can remove these unnecessary "interconnectivity fees" being demanded by Stradcom.

We remain committed to your efforts to renew our blighted land. *Maraming salamat po!*

PIRA
Philippine Insurers and Reinsurers Association

Court orders release of 13 Vietnamese poachers

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—A local court has ordered the release of 13 Vietnamese nationals facing trial for illegal poaching in Palawan, on a plea bargaining arrangement brokered by the Department of Justice.

Judge Bayani Unnan of Regional Trial Court Branch 50 granted the justice department's motion to require the pretrial investigation of the Vietnamese nationals' case which paved the way for their settlement, allowing the 29-to-39-year-old men to go scot-free after two years in detention.

The Vietnamese fishers were indicted for slaughtering 181 critically endangered green sea turtles after they were intercepted near the Tubbataha reefs in 2008, in the waters of El Nido municipality in northern Palawan by park rangers of the Joint Task Force Mahimapaya.

Found in the cargo hold of their vessel, FV/Qng 90224 TS, which the Vietnamese crew allegedly tried to scuttle by flooding the boat while they were being pursued by rangers, were 300 hawksbill turtles, classified as "critically endangered," which is the highest rating for a living animal based on the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) classification system.

The plea agreement will pave the way for the release of the 13 Vietnamese nationals whose sentence were reduced to the two-year period they had been under detention, in addition to fines that will be served by the crews and the confiscation by the Philippine government of their fishing vessel.

Separate sources said that then President Macapagal Arroyo had ordered former Justice Secretary Alberto Agra to broker the resolution of the case during a state visit to Hanoi early last year after the Vietnamese government raised concerns about the continued delay in the prosecution of the case.

Manila-based DOJ prosecutor Philip Kimpo, an order of Agra, had entered into a plea bargaining agreement with the Vietnamese's local counsels, which was eventually approved by the court.

The nongovernment organization World Wide Fund for Nature Philippines, which described the case as one of the biggest foreign poaching cases in Palawan thus far, hailed the conviction of the Vietnamese as "sufficient justice."

"This is a good example of

BY THEIR Sept. 1, 2008, file photo released by the El Nido Foundation Inc. through World Wide Fund for Nature-Philippines, El Nido project manager Ricardo Calzada (center, standing) measures one of the 181 dead Hawksbill turtles aboard Vietnamese poacher's FV Number Palawan. The men has been detained until two years in prison after they were caught red-handed

enforcement meted out to a logical and just end. Laws are enacted to create that level playing field designed to protect the public good across the greater good," Tony Tan, WWF vice president and chief executive officer, said in a statement.

WWF, which monitors foreign poaching cases in Palawan, claims that over a thousand nationals have been arrested and charged for poaching in the waters of Palawan alone.

"Over 800 poachers were Chinese. Sentences have historically proven low, under four of damaging international relations with neighboring countries," WWF said in the statement.

WWF noted that in September of 2007, 126 endangered Green Sea Turtles (Chelonia mydas) and 13,000 turtle eggs were found aboard Chinese fishing vessel FV 51007 in Iloilo.

In April 2008, a 23-man Vietnamese poaching detail aboard the MV Quang Mo was arrested in Balabac, southern Palawan. Retrieved from the craft were preserved fish and a sea turtle.

In July of 2008, four Vietnamese aboard FV Qng 95066 were arrested for alleged poaching off Cuyo Island, 32 Nido.

Four other fishing boats, believed to be Vietnamese, escaped.

In April of 2009, seven Chinese poachers aboard an unmarked speedboat were arrested in the waters near Isla de El Nido.

Thirteen dead and one still-living Green Sea Turtle greeted authorities. It was quickly tagged and released.

Under Section 97 of the Philippines' Fisheries Code (RA 8550), the Vietnamese fishermen were facing the likelihood of 12 to 20 years imprisonment if found guilty plus fines. —Dr. dumpite D. Anda, Inquirer Southern Luzon

Upland farming in Makiling poses danger

By Marlouie P. Elevo
Inquirer Southern Luzon

LOS BAÑOS, Laguna—Just when his farming become lucrative again.

In Los Baños town in Laguna, the premier of growing ginger, corn, pepper and other crops is the upland areas of Mount Makiling has been blamed for soil erosion and flash floods during typhoons.

"Parang naghubad ng sombrero. Eldo ginawa being pinaro over," Primo dela Torre said in describing boulders rolling downhill when Supertyphoon "Milenyo" struck four years ago.

A huge rock, the size of a cabinet, had crashed into Dr. la Torre's cleanup and this has been an unmovable to him than he has left the idle still jutting inside his house.

The Makiling forest reserve, covering 4,244 hectares of land, is under the jurisdiction of the Makiling Center for Mountain Ecosystems (MCME), a unit of the University of the Philippines Los Baños.

The center's director, Jose Ingente, said he has ordered a field investigation into the matter.

Amelia Parchamento, another resident of Barangay Bambang at the foot of Makiling, has gotten used to evacuating every time reports of a coming typhoon reaches her.

Her home clings to what was left of a concrete bridge. Pictures of the bridge collapsed when Ribbon, Tropical Storm "Ondoy" and Typhoon "Pepeng"

SOIL ERODED from Mt. Makiling in Los Baños, Laguna, roll down due to continuous erosion.

INQUIRER SOUTHERN LUZON

came last year, and still more when Typhoon "Basyang" hit early this month.

"How many more typhoons are we supposed to endure this year?" Parchamento said.

Annual crops

Residents at the foot of Makiling believe that the flash floods are not only nature's wrath but also brought about by human activities.

They say the mountain soil is eroded due to the "inappropriate" farming of annual crops, such as corn, pineapple, bananas, peppers and gingers. The crops are harvested seasonally and have shallow root systems that hardly hold the soil.

Trees and other perennial are suitable to slopes because they are deeply rooted to prevent erosion and flood, they say.

"After the crop harvests, the soil becomes idle. It is really better trees that should be grown. If there's instead," Emiliano Lontoc, municipal environment and natural resources officer, said in Filipino.

Justice Bonita, who has lifted low hectares of sterilization and livestock trees on Makiling for more than a decade, defended the practice of growing ginger.

"(Ginger) are planted only to about six inches deep. But what we do, we plant them in between the rainbows trees so they do not cause erosion," he said in Filipino.

Dominga Ocasa, president of the farmers' group Samahan ng Maguesaka sa Paanan ng Bundok Makiling, also said planting ginger in the mountaintop should not be banned for erosion.

"Pagdidigay' human kami ng

holding pero ng kaitawan 19% place before like madre de cacao trees to prevent erosion," Ocasa said. the group has 350 families as members.

Willpower

But a senior party in the Makiling preservation, her who requested anonymity for fear of authority to speak, doubted the theories saying erosion is caused by soil sunlight, which was why farmers prefer to grow them to open areas.

"The planting of annual crops, such as ginger, loosens the soil to Mt. Makiling, because the roots are not deep," he said.

Moreover, these crops are seasonal in nature, thus the tendency to uproot them on a seasonal basis, too.

The source said the practice of growing annual crops was introduced by the bureau under a program of the Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Agricultural Research in 2006. This has become detrimental to the mountain, he added.

He expressed alarm that the farmers are practicing "kaingin" (slash and burn) agriculture, and firewood and charcoal making since the early 1990s, resulting in huge degradation.

"Perhaps what we need to do is the political will. These farmers have to be land tilts, but the university could not just drive them away because they have been there and have grown crops for many years. There would also be political implications if you relocate them because they are voters (in local elections)," he said.

3,000 trees planted in Occidental Mindoro town

CITY OF CALAPAN, Or.—Almost 3,000 native trees were planted simultaneously by at least 300 people in three villages in San Jose town, Occidental Mindoro, Friday.

The tree planting in Barangays Natandol, Pandurucan and Ilin proper was part of the Wildlife Ornithology Conservation Foundation Inc.'s grassroots reforestation for the conservation of Philippine teak (locally known as malakadiwdiw), said founding member Dr. Ansell Matalia, a biology teacher at De La Salle University in Manila.

Matalia, a Mindoreño, said De La Salle's Green Millions Trees in 2011 and Around (GMTA) co-sponsored the native tree seedlings with WBCSI.

Ilin and Indoreño barangay captains' associations, together

with the Department of Education, Department of Interior and Local Government, Philippine National Police, Sangguniang Kabataan Federation, and local government units of Ilin and Andoleng supported the activity.

The GMTA is a project initiated by Sen. Antonio Lozano and the Lasallian institution for the Environment (Life), which has planted 614,684 seedlings as of end February 2010.

It aims to plant one million trees around the Philippines by June 2011, in time for the centennial celebration of the Lasallian presence in the Philippines.

Seedlings are grown at WBCSI's nursery in Rubbo, Barangay Ipil, which area established in Sept. 2006.

To date 58,000 native trees are being grown in Ilin to help restore the Philippine teak forest, said Matalia.

Philippine teak (Tectona philippinensis) is an endemic tree found only in Batanes and Mindoro.

The small to medium-sized tree has a flaky bark and heavy light purple flowers. It produces hardwood that is used for firewood and construction.

It is considered an endangered species by the International Union on the Conservation of Nature and has been declared the Philippines' flagship species for tree conservation.

Logging, charcoal making and habitat destruction are real perils of the Philippine teak, which is a major material used for the construction of Philippine railroads, said Matalia.

He said the tree planting was meant to restore the habitat and population of the threatened flora and fauna and to feed and shelter for localized and transients.

He added that more suitable forests mean continuous supply of fertile water, under sustained irrigation, more silt-free rivers and seas and better protection from calamities while maintaining stable temperature, said Matalia's best defense against global warming.

About 2,000 propagules were planted in Ilin and Andoleng, two of the three islands off San Jose town in Occidental Mindoro. —Mindoreno T. Hevia, Inquirer Southern Luzon

EDUCATION Secretary Armin Luistro is a surprise visit to Pedro Vitero Pilahuican Memorial School in Lipa City on Tuesday.

Education secretary surprises teachers, students in Lipa

LIPA CITY—Jose Andal, the principal of Dolor Videro Malabanan Memorial School (DVMMS), said she was in the middle of praising photos of Education Secretary Armin Luistro on his posted in each classroom to as a way of introducing him to students when an unexpected guest came in.

"I was about to ask what he wanted because I thought he was a parent. I was even still holding his photos that we researched through the Internet when he suddenly entered the room and told us that he wanted to observe a class," Andal said in Filipino.

"I told my companions, 'Patay, dito in the one in the photo we are holding.'"

Andal said she could not find the right words to describe how honored the school was for having Luistro over, as he was the first education secretary to pay them a visit.

An electric fan in each room could not stifle the warmth felt by both students and teachers that Tuesday afternoon.

The teachers were using manila paper to illustrate lessons in class but Luistro was happy to see the teachers' dedication and the students' eagerness to learn despite the unfavorable.

Surprise visit

Luistro was prized the teachers what he came early for a meeting in the city.

He said he wanted to see the conditions of the teachers and students in the public schools in the provinces.

"This is a sentimental trip because it was here where I first experienced teaching in a public school. After that year, I became interested in teaching, that was when I first thought of becoming a teacher," Luistro said.

Lipa is Luistro's hometown and the school is where he first taught as a substitute in 1971. He was in second year high school at De La Salle-Lipa when he volunteered to teach in a public school.

Luistro was down in six classes of Grade 5 and Grade 6, and observed how the teachers and the students performed in class.

He discussed some points and raised questions on the subjects of Mathematics, Science, English and Filipino.

Luistro asked the students to take care of their books so these would be used by the incoming batch for the next school year. He also requested them to have their books checked for some errors and that whatever found any would be rewarded.

Luistro was reunited with a former student who now teaches Grade 5 students at the PVMMS. He sat down in bel-class and observed her teaching skills.

Mona Mendoza said the education chief was his teacher in English and Religion in the 1980s and considered him an inspiration in her career.

"I was very happy and proud that he was my teacher and now, he is the Deped secretary," Mendoza said.

Luistro has visited 12 schools since he assumed his post in July. He has conducted random visits in some schools in Metro Manila and Nueva Ecija.

The secretary said he was happy with what he had seen so far and was impressed with how teachers managed to find ways to make their classes engaging despite the challenges faced by the country's basic education system.

Dedicated teachers

"I remember one school I visited where the teacher was handling 63 Grade 1 or Grade 2 students, as the class was packed. I think there were only one or two electric fans and there were not too many lights, but the teacher was very engaged in her lessons and the students were very interactive," Luistro said.

He said his surprise visits had allowed him to see the real challenges in terms of basic input in education, addressing the basic needs of teachers being the most important one.

"Although the department takes this as a big challenge, this is part of our reform efforts to address backlogs in education's resources within five years. With the support of education stakeholders, I look in greater more and outside, we will be able to achieve it," he said.

Sherrah Erika C. Lasaba, Inquirer Southern Luzon

School exec suspended

SILANG, Laguna—The Department of Education (DepEd) in the province has suspended a high school principal in Los Baños for alleged sexual harassment.

A source from the DepEd, who requested anonymity for lack of authority to speak on the matter, said the suspension order was served against Jacinto Bagan, principal of Los Baños National High School.

The DepEd regional office has filed administrative charges against Bagan, who was accused by two teachers of sexual harassment.

Edwin Joya, the department's legal officer, said the suspension was based on findings of a committee that investigated the issue.

Emmanuel Ardina, DepEd administrative officer and member of the investigating committee, said the alleged harassment cases took place on June 14-17 when the victims were left alone with Bagan in the school's faculty room.

Bagan refused to comment when asked by the Inquirer about the suspension order. Marivic Cinco, Inquirer Southern Luzon

JOR

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JOR

VALUE ADDED TAX (VAT) ON TOLL FEES

Pursuant to BIR Revenue Memorandum Circular (RMC) No. 61-2010 dated July 19, 2010, the 12% Value Added Tax (VAT) on toll fees shall be imposed on all expressways effective August 16, 2010.

As authorized by the Toll Regulatory Board, the following VAT-inclusive toll prices shall be in effect on the Manila North Expressway Project starting Monday, August 16, 2010 at 10:00 p.m.

CLASS 1 Cars/Jeepneys

TOLL PLAZAS	SMEX	MEX	NLEX	NLEX	SCTEX	STAR	PUL	SLEX	SLEX	MCX	AMC	TPLEX
Balintawak-Nlex	87											
Valenzuela	87	87										
Meycauayan	87	87	87									
Marilao	87	87	87	87								
Bocaue	87	87	87	87	87							
Tabang	87	87	87	87	87	87						
Sta. Rita	87	87	87	87	87	87						
Dau	87	87	87	87	87	87	87					
San Simon	115	115	115	115	115	115	115	115				
San Fernando	145	145	145	145	145	145	145	145	87			
Mexico	87	87	87	87	87	87	87	87	87	87		
Angeles	131	131	131	131	131	131	131	131	87	87	87	
San	160	160	160	160	160	160	160	160	115	87	87	87
Sta. Ana	160	160	160	160	160	160	160	160	115	87	87	87

CLASS 2 Buses/Trucks

TOLL PLAZAS	SMEX	MEX	NLEX	NLEX	SCTEX	STAR	PUL	SLEX	SLEX	MCX	AMC	TPLEX
Balintawak-Nlex	152											
Valenzuela	152	152										
Meycauayan	152	152	152									
Marilao	152	152	152	152								
Bocaue	152	152	152	152	152							
Tabang	152	152	152	152	152	152						
Sta. Rita	152	152	152	152	152	152						
Dau	152	152	152	152	152	152	152					
San Simon	201	201	201	201	201	201	201	201				
San Fernando	253	253	253	253	253	253	253	253	152			
Mexico	152	152	152	152	152	152	152	152	152	152		
Angeles	229	229	229	229	229	229	229	229	152	152	152	
San	280	280	280	280	280	280	280	280	201	152	152	152
Sta. Ana	280	280	280	280	280	280	280	280	201	152	152	152

CLASS 3 Trailers/Large Trucks

TOLL PLAZAS	SMEX	MEX	NLEX	NLEX	SCTEX	STAR	PUL	SLEX	SLEX	MCX	AMC	TPLEX
Balintawak-Nlex	174											
Valenzuela	174	174										
Meycauayan	174	174	174									
Marilao	174	174	174	174								
Bocaue	174	174	174	174	174							
Tabang	174	174	174	174	174	174						
Sta. Rita	174	174	174	174	174	174						
Dau	174	174	174	174	174	174	174					
San Simon	287	287	287	287	287	287	287	287				
San Fernando	347	347	347	347	347	347	347	347	174			
Mexico	347	347	347	347	347	347	347	347	174	174		
Angeles	315	315	315	315	315	315	315	315	174	174	174	
San	384	384	384	384	384	384	384	384	287	174	174	174
Sta. Ana	384	384	384	384	384	384	384	384	287	174	174	174

SECTION	LENGTH (in Kms.)	VEHICLE CLASSIFICATION		
		Class 1	Class 2	Class 3
Segment 1 Metro - Tipo	8.00	25	50	80

MANILA NORTH TOLLWAYS CORPORATION

Rise in STD cases alarms health execs

IRIGBHA CITY—City health officials here have registered alarm over the rising cases of sexually transmitted disease (STD) among local transgenders.

"As of July are had 211 cases, mostly male-to patients ranging as 12 and 13 years old," Dr. Vincent Martinez, assistant city health officer, said in an interview until Friday over radio dwCC FM in Tayabas City.

He said the number of STD cases for the current year had surpassed the average number of victims for the past five years.

Martinez said what also alarmed local health officials was the indifference of the victims.

"When we asked the victims who their sex partners were, they just said they didn't know. The gang did it for fun. The gang had sex with a common partner. And for the victims, STD is not a matter of serious concern," he said.

He revealed that the city keeps records of cases of human immune-deficiency virus (HIV), which causes the acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS).

"Those having HIV cases in the city are not sex workers but ordinary people. We could not provide the exact figures because we believe that there are more unreported cases," Martinez admitted.

He also did not provide the distribution and locations of HIV cases in the city.

The Inquirer interviewed high school students from private education here and learned that having commercial sex workers for "non-night-stand for the hours" is an easy as renting a computer unit for video games.

The informant also asked that the name of his school be withheld.

He said he price of the sexual service depends on the number of "users" and the "appearance and age" of the sex worker.

"But it is cheaper in the dozens. We're four and paid P500 each. We bought the 'pusit' to the vacant house of one of the gang members. It's fun and entertainment. We all enjoy the experience," he said.

Angular has lobbyists interviewed by the Inquirer said the proliferation of night joints and bars in the city also helped in the spread of STD.

"Those nice workers, most of them amateurs or pretending to be one, often transact business inside the bars which serve as their hangouts," said a college student who often spends frolic evening's "gimmicks" in popular bars here.

Last year, a multisectoral "AIDS swallelight summit" was held here to boost and inoculate Filipinos who died from the AIDS pandemic across the globe.

The summit-in-a nearly-one-

DEMOLITION AT BANTERAN
The Chapel here officials summit and Philippi Revolution demolish illegal structures of resorts owners within 20 meters from the shoreline of Sto. Fe on Banteran Island.

'CCTV won't stop the killings'

DAVAO CITY—The killings in the city, said Sr. Fe the Southwoods of the shadowy Davao Death Squad (DDS), cannot be stopped with the installation of the new public safety system, said Senior Supt. Rizzo Aspiras, city police chief.

Aspiras, said on Friday that the state-of-the-art seven center now help you security supports caught on top of the three-storey television camera installed in the city but only to witnesses from witnesses would help police stop the attacks.

The DDS has killed dozens of suspected criminals since 1998 and the number increases to increase this year, Bro. Eduardo de Lara observed that incidents appeared to have accepted the attacks as part of their normal lives.

De Lara, a member of the group, headed an investigation into the activities of the so-called DDS. The final result of the investigation had not been released since.

Early the month, the city government and some private companies launched what was termed as the city's most advanced public safety monitoring system.

The system, which will be manned from a command center in Bajo Monte village, is equipped with 107 CCTV cameras mounted on the city's strategic areas.

Retired Col. Mario Monzanto, officer in charge of the city's 911 emergency and response center, said the new system "will not stop killings but can not help to progress in the city's safety measurements but also same disaster alert and weather watch and rescue operations in times of calamity."

Monzanto also said the facility will help bring down criminality.

Aspiras argued that the system could contribute criminality. "Of course, it will help. The hoodlums will help," he said.

"But if the suspects could not be identified and arrested we will still be in the dark about it," he said, arrested the [illegible] Monzanto

Roxas City declares dengue outbreak

ROXAS CITY—The city council here has declared an outbreak of dengue fever in the city in the wake of the rising number of cases that has reached 444, with four deaths, since January until July 7.

The council declared a special session on Saturday upon the request of Mayor Angel Alan Colmenares to declare the outbreak.

Colmes said the Department of Health (DOH) considers dengue cases here to have reached epidemic proportions, and cited the many cases reported daily in the villages of Lawaan and Banica.

The number of cases in the city alone already surpassed some 300 dengue cases recorded for the whole province of Capiz in 2005.

From January to July, the dengue cases in Capiz have ranged in 1,337 with 32 deaths.

The provincial government led by Gov. Victor Tanco Jr. has earlier declared Capiz under a state of calamity on Aug. 2.

The provincial board agreed that 7.5 percent of the total appropriated five percent calamity fund for 2006 will be used for dengue control and to buy medicines.

Dr. Esperanza Gopalcos, acting city health officer, said a composite team has been formed to declare the breeding places of dengue-carrying mosquitoes. Its tasks are said Aedes albopictus. These are day-biting mosquitoes that breed in clear, stagnant waters, she said.

The composite team is made up of city and barangay officials, the DOH, City Engineer's Office, police, Bureau of Fire Protection, non-governmental organizations, and other volunteers.

The composite team will inspect clean-up activities in the affected villages and undertake misting or fogging if needed.

The DOH will recommend fogging during outbreaks or epidemics, which shall be carried out only under the supervision of a licensed or accredited pest control applicator.

Using a portion of the city's calamity fund, Colmes said the city government would provide insecticides which mosquitoes need repellents.

He said he would also put up "Dengue Crisis Management Center" in the City Hall to cater to the needs of dengue patients.

The city government will likewise pay for the cremation of indigent patients in need of blood transfusion, in coordination with the Philippine Red Cross.

Colmes said they would inquire each barangay to donate at least 10 bags of blood per month until such time the outbreak is contained.

Vice Mayor Ronnie Dadivas said each member of the city Council would also do their duties by leading clean-up drives in areas designated to them. He said 18 persons would be assigned to each councilor to assist the massive clean-up drive campaign.

In Naga City, with sustained information drive against dengue, the number of cases this year has also substantially gone down in the first seven months, according to Dr. Tito Borja, medical officer.

The information drive and the cooperation of village officials have decreased the number of cases from last year's record of 210 in the same period to this year's 133.

Borja said they have made use of broadcast media to tell communities of the importance of total clean and destroying the habitat of dengue-carrying mosquito.

He said they also continued to conduct village-level meetings with local officials and school closings activities where the cooperation of the communities was mobilized.

Borja noted a very significant decrease of cases in April with 46 percent decrease compared to last year's record of 13 cases to only 2 cases in the same period this year.

In June, he said, the previous record of 61 cases fell from down to 21 cases. The highest number of cases this year had reached 29 cases in July this year compared to 46 since last year.

Borja believed that they could still push down the number of dengue cases here through sustained information drive to keep the cases of dengue at bay. Felipe F. Colmes, Inquirer Visayas; Anne Ramonibe Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon

NEWSBRIEFS

■ LAGUNA

Con artists target utility stores, face raps

CHARGES of large-scale syndicated estafa were filed on Friday against six persons who allegedly disguised as employees of a large shopping mall and its public utility company to bilk unsuspecting cashier Mary Manalo, authorities said.

Chief Supt. Danilo Mananio, police chief of Sta. Paula's town, identified Marvin Sison Gonzales, 32; Arnulfo Garden, 36; Paul Ramirez Medina Perez, Frederick Go and Sonny Bautista.

Sta. Paula's prosecutor Jesus Bienvenido at employees of Atlantic Shopping Center and brought 21 counts of estafa to them. Total Prosecutor Solution Inc., a power utility where Shopping Bautista Sonny Sison Bautista.

"They treated her cheeks amounting to P1.2 million payment, but the documents later found that the signatures on the checks were forged that the employees had no relation in Sta. Paula," Mananio said. **Marvin Cruz, Inquirer Southern Luzon**

■ BATANGAS

Police officer dies, 3 hurt in shooting

A POLICE officer died while three others were wounded after three unidentified men shot them with at least 40 bullets in Barangay Bolbok in Batangas City on Friday night, police said.

PO2 Reynaldo Mercadejas, 36, who was assigned to the Batangas police, and Richard Villoria, 42, were having coffee when they were attacked by the three Thugs (Bolbok, Station Road). After Sr. Inspector Arnulfo Garden, police director, said.

John Paolo Villoria, 17, and Mark Jonas Sun, 23, who were passing by at that time, were also hit by the bullets. **Marvin Cruz, Lourdes Inquirer Southern Luzon**

■ LA UNION

Marijuana bricks seized at checkpoint

POLICE seized about 10 kg of dried marijuana in dry fruit from two people they held at a checkpoint in San Gabriel town in Sillimgdo, southern Luzon.

Acting on a tip from another informant, policemen and agents of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency flagged down a jeepney Barangay Bantoneng at about 2:30 a.m. and after a search, found four plastic packs containing 24 marijuana bricks worth P1.2 million.

Police identified the drivers, Emiliano Calanding, 42, and his companion Ben Fernando, 50, Bantog Public, Bl. Joseph Chayan, 42, Quezon City, 10 years old. **Yolanda Stinet, Inquirer Northern Luzon**

■ NUEVA ECIJA

Gunmen ambush municipal officials

A MUNICIPAL councilor was killed on Wednesday when armed men ambushed his group that included Mayor Quintin Cacapit in front of a public market in Gapan City, police said.

Councilor Franklin Domingo was headed to Gabaldon District Hospital and was declared dead by doctors, Senior Insp. Rhodel Sobrepeña, Gapan City police chief, said. Cpl. Cyrus Allen Jerry Agapito and Benjie Garrit and their driver were not hurt, he said.

The officials' Toyota Innova was [illegible] along the Talugtug-Gapan-San Roque road when gunmen opened fire. **Manuel Gabieg, Inquirer Central Luzon**

Loyal Marcos soldier is Apo's gatekeeper in Batac

By Cristina Arradon
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BATAC CITY—He can see more the air-conditioned mausoleum housing the remains of the late strongman Ferdinand Marcos only going to visit him.

Not even the strongman's widow, Ilocos Norte Rep. Imelda Marcos, can see her husband without passing through armed soldier Catalino Bactat, the mausoleum's gatekeeper for the last 17 years.

Bactat, 62, has been operating the same large doors of the stone-built structure leading to Marcos' well-preserved remains since 1993 when his body was flown from Hawaii, where he lived in exile from 1986 until he died in 1989.

Like a loyal soldier, Bactat kept guarding the former president from the time he was decided to the Provincial Guards Battalion in 1969 until the Marcoses flew to Hawaii following the 1986 People Power revolt that toppled the strongman from power.

Bactat was 20 when he trained as member of the provincial guards and was assigned in Malacañang.

Like many other Ilocanos who

got employed during the Ilocos years, Bactat remained loyal to the former president until his death.

Bactat was assigned to the Camp Elpidio Quirino in Ilocos Norte when his father became ailed to retreat in a country side of Pasil, said "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. in 1993. Bongbong, now a senator, was the first family member to arrive here after he and his entire family were in the close-in security team.

When Marcos' body arrived in Ilocos Norte in 1993, the family asked Bactat to do everything that time close in over 3,000 communities in 68 countries, to honor and remember the people lost to AIDS, to support people living with AIDS and to defend those who are most affected with AIDS and AIDS.

In Albay City, Jose Gabriella has committed support to measures to reduce the number of HIV infection among adolescents.

On HIV and AIDS prevention, control, care and support. In the city, the provincial government's policy is to strengthen its local response through an effective education, information and counseling services in all level health centers with the purpose of limit HIV/AIDS and AIDS transmission.

The provincial government, in collaboration with the Department of Health, has set a training on comprehensive sexuality transmitted infection case management and manual operating procedures on social hygiene that time close in over 3,000 communities in 68 countries, to honor and remember the people lost to AIDS, to support people living with AIDS and to defend those who are most affected with AIDS and AIDS.

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The provincial government, in collaboration with the Department of Health, has set a training on comprehensive sexuality transmitted infection case management and manual operating procedures on social hygiene close meeting sent records.

Schools said they have encouraged have lessons, night clubs, bars and other related entertainment establishments, including hotels, to make condoms available always.

Dr. Purifino Avelino, Philippine National AIDS Council executive director, earlier revealed that there were 97 Sr. citizens with HIV as of March 30.

Five new cases of the 97 were recorded from January to March 15 this year.

To address the problem, the Albay AIDS council held a provincial HIV summit on Aug. 2-6, which was funded by the United Nations Development Program.

Albay is the first local government unit to respond to a call to strengthen local response to HIV/AIDS. Dolfie F. Abalos Jr., with report from Joy Ali Munoz, Inquirer Southern Luzon

CATALINO Bactat guards the remains of the late strongman Ferdinand Marcos.

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Unbelievable Aces halfway through Fiesta Cup crown

By Musong R. Cuerillo

KEEPING IT: comeback all night, Alaska pulled out all the stops on both ends in the endgame to hack out a 94-90 victory over San Miguel and take a surprising 2-0 lead in their PBA Fiesta Conference title series at the Araneta Coliseum.

The Aces survived a scoreless spell for three to six minutes to the fourth period as they blew an eight-point lead early before hitting seven-of-eight free throws in the final 17 seconds for the win.

"We didn't expect this," Alaska coach Tim Cone said, when asked what he thought about being in control of the best-of-seven series most experts predicted San Miguel would unreadily dominate.

"But you know, we have played two All-Star basketball games."

Dioncee Simpson scored 20 points and shared 17 boards before fouling out with under 30 seconds left.

But when he did step out, Alaska was the solid control that talk of a sweep seemed all too realistic now.

"I went a championship," said Simpson, who admitted to be inspired by the presence of Manuel but could not Sparrows or cingulin. "I am not worried about the (first loser) award like everyone thinks I am."

Simpson played big for the second straight game but the Aces also got 14 points from Jay Drosmen, 12 each from Cyrus Baguio and Tony Dela Cruz and six points, five rebounds and four assists from a fagged-out LA Tenorio.

Tenorio hit a big basket with 1:03 left—a one-handed running jumper—that gave the Aces an 87-85 lead before San Miguel took the driver's seat for the last time after a Jay Washington basket with 1:20 left.

But Simpson hit four straight charities and Dela Cruz added two of his own that sandwiched two freebies awarded Gabriel Freeman on the last foul by Simpson for a 91-90 Alaska lead with 22.4 to play.

San Miguel had a chance to come closer but Drosmen deflected a pass by Washington that led a free throw by Baguio with 10.8 seconds left, 94-90.

Joseph Yeo, who took the game's last attempt with an off-balanced triple attempt that hit nothing, led the Boosters with 28 points, 14 of them coming in the middle two quarters.

Though his feet have a huge edge, Cone refused to talk with confidence.

"It's only 2-0 and it takes four games to win a series," Cone said. "I've lost everything you would possibly lose throughout my career. So no, I am not confident."

The second dual game is scheduled Wednesday and the Aces could use the three-day break to recharge with Tenorio to head straight to the hospital for some IV after battling diarrhea Saturday night.

Meanwhile, Hall was the happy for next season's top draft pick and gave it to Derby Ace because of a trade that happened last year.

Talk Yr Text will pick second, a choice acquired from Rowly Rarako Cotiles to a trade involving Yousif Aljamal, Gilbert Lee and Ivy Chio.

Coach Cots will select third overall followed by Nuns or Bolts. Talk N Text again and then Batangas Glenbel. The last three picks in the first round will be determined after the ongoing elimination.

The scores

ALASKA 94—Simpson 20, Drosmen 14, Baguio 12, Dela Cruz 12, Ayenda 8, Fonacier 7, Intal 6, Reyes 5, Lastimosa 2, Castelo 0

SAN MIGUEL 90—Yeo 28, Washington 20, Seigle 20, Freeman 12, Mallari 5, Caidoy 3, Ebona 2, Cabagnot 0, Barroca 0, Pascual 0, Perez 0

Quarters: 19-18, 39-43, 71-71, 94-90

CYRUS Baguio of Alaska aborts his drive and looks for an open teammate as San Miguel Beer's Jay Washington applies the pressure in yesterday's thrilling Game 2. ALEXIS CAMACHO

THE HEAT IS ON Miami head coach Erik Spoelstra reaches a kid dribbling fundamentals during his basketball clinic at SM North Edsa on Saturday. "Coach Spo," the first NBA head coach of Filipino ancestry, wrote more Filipino kids today when he visits Bray Town in Marikina to also host basketball drills for some 400 kids.

Frankie joins top Cebu golf field

FRANKIE MONTOS adds luster to the ICTSI's first stop in Cebu this Wednesday when the country's most revered cheerleader joins a cool 80-man field vying for top honors in the mostly Cebu Country Club festivities.

The two-time Philippine Open champion, the country's most successful golf pro, joins his younger peers in the circuit for the first time since tying for sixth place to the rich The Country Club International last January.

The 54-hole event is really the most star-studded that season with Angelo Que, fresh from winning the Worldwide Holdings Selangor Masters in Malaysia on Saturday, also in the mix together with fellow Asian Tour regulars Jeric Pagsinan, Antonio Lascuña, Antonio Lascuña and Mars Pecoy.

Reigning Philippine Open champion Elmer Salonoy, who was disqualified in the Del Monte leg together with Pagsinan and Richard Sinfuego, will be aiming to bounce back from that unfortunate incident.

Others in the field are Jun Bonus, Elmer Salonoy, Michael Bibat, Gene Boadoy, Anthony Fernando, Jerome Delatante, Dinar Bungay, Cedric Ly(X), Rey Pagsinan, Carlo Villarama, Danny Zarate and former RP Open champion Robert Rentoria.

The Cebu Country Club is actually hosting a big professional event for the first time in years, with the one-time par-72 layout now spruced up in championship shape.

The tournament, which stakes a P200,000 prize for the champion, is the 10th leg of the 14-stage circuit organized by Filipinas Golf Tournaments, Inc. with Alvelyn Espiritu Ventura as chief operations.

Mikoza played in the British Senior Open and is taking a break from his hectic European tour.Japan Tour schedules. Musong R. Cuerillo

RP athletes to Youth Olympics off tomorrow

THE MINI-ATHLETE Philippine contingent hopes for the first Youth Olympic Games in Singapore tomorrow optimistic that it can measure up against the world's finest athletes in the competition scheduled Aug. 14-26.

"We can feel the pressure, but we're very excited," weightlifting lass Pamela Liena, tipped as the country's brightest hope for a medal, said favorites during a sendoff party tendered by multivitamin company Pharmaton, one of the sponsors of Team Philippines.

The 16-year-old Liena, who has been given the honor as the country's flag-bearer during the opening ceremonies, is competing in the 63 kg class.

The San Antonio, Nueva Ecija-born athlete will be joined in the Games by swimmers Jasmine Alkhaldi and Jessie Lacuna, basketball players Ray Parks, Michael Pate, Chris Michael Tiboura, tennis standout Jenny Pantaleon and taekwondo wild card bet Kirt Barbosa.

Liena, a world mid-junior champion in powerlifting, expects to uphold chink to win a medal with Kazakhstan, Russia and China sending their best lists to the competition.

"It's going to be tough, but I prepared long and hard for the Youth Olympics," said Liena, who took up the sport at four.

Swimming chief Mark Joseph, who will serve as delegation head, believes the respective National Sports Associations have done "pretty well" in preparing the YOG-bound athletes.

"We can never discuss our chances of winning," said Joseph. "In swimming, the focus are so close and clustered." Cedell P. Pajes

OFF TO SINGAPORE: Members of the Youth Olympic team to Singapore were feted by the Philippine Olympians Association headed by dubbed Pilipinas Joe Saculdo at Vitals Plaza. In persons are, standing, from left: Jessica Tang (basketball), Michael Rivera (basketball), Kirt Barbosa (taekwondo), Jessie King Lacuna (swimming), Patricia Liena (weightlifting), Michael Pate (basketball), Jasmin Alkhaldi (swimming) and Jesse Fuerzavalos (tennis). Seated from left are: Nonoy Campos, POA president Art Macapagal, Rafael Pacificador, Antonio Oposio, Philippine Sports Commission chair Nikki Garcia and former Senator and Olympian Freddie Webb. Also in picture are former olympians and coaches who attended the send-off ceremony. Not in picture is Bobby Ray Parks Jr. (basketball).

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DID YOU KNOW

THERE were 857,000 tertiary schools, both public and private, in Metro Manila in the academic year 2008-2009.

Cyril L. Bautista, Inquirer Research

No rest for MMDA enforcers

By Miko Morales

MAJOR clearinghouses in Metro Manila will soon be manned by traffic enforcers of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) round-the-clock.

MMDA Chair Francis Tolentino said yesterday the agency would soon deploy traffic enforcers from 11 p.m. onwards, primarily to boost its crackdown on "colorum" vehicles (those which operate without a franchise).

He added that the agency was now drafting the guidelines on the deployment of traffic enforcers at night to ensure that the policy would not be abused.

"We will make sure that the men who will apprehend violations will be legitimate," Tolentino said during a radio program on dzBB. "The ones who will be on the night shift will be carefully evaluated and selected."

The guidelines would also ensure that the mistakes of the past "won't happen again," according to MMDA spokesperson Yves Gonzalez.

He said that at the moment, the MMDA was still determining how many enforcers would be needed for the night shift and where to deploy them.

He added that the program would be implemented "soon."

MMDA General Manager Robert Nazareno also told the Inquirer that under the present setup, the agency's traffic enforcers work in two shifts: From 6 a.m. to 2 p.m. and then from 2 p.m. to 10 p.m.

Under Tolentino's proposal, another shift would be added—the 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. shift—ensuring that major streets in Metro Manila would be under the watchful eyes of MMDA traffic enforcers 24 hours a day.

Tolentino said that aside from apprehending colorum vehicles, traffic enforcers working the night shift should also tone the flow of traffic, especially during a heavy downpour or flashfloods, and go after violators.

The MMDA source said, meanwhile, would be on hand to spot traffic outlaws caused by flooded streets.

"There will also be no unwarranted [leaving on personnel]," Tolentino said, referring to off-duty enforcers who may suddenly opt to work the night shift without the permission of the agency.

He added that to prevent motorists from being taken advantage of, night duty personnel would be in proper uniform with their name plates and identification cards clearly visible.

The public may also contact the MMDA headquarters to verify the identity of the enforcer if necessary, he said.

Tolentino said the MMDA would be picking qualified traffic enforcers based on their fitness and track record to ensure that they could handle the demands of the job.

MMDA personnel attach stickers to passenger buses lined up on Mitsa Plaza, Quezon City, as part of its crackdown against "colorum" vehicles. INQUIRER / DJACOS

MOTORIZED VEHICLE
Leonel, 68, of Manila, writes: "Motorized pedicabs are already considered as a menace and a hazard to traffic. The Land Transportation Office should require their drivers to apply for a driving license and have their vehicles registered as LTVs."

METRO Citizen's call
0918-8985566

Worsening traffic in Pasig

Traffic on Ortigas Extension is getting worse especially now that construction is not allowed. We understand the policy about overloading and we commend that city officials should have an alternative or how to alleviate traffic in the area.
Debbie, 30, Pasig City

Squatters' haven in Quezon City

Attention, Mayor Bistek. Must be patching up 22 Anonymous lanes (Joan Street) Project to rig squatters as a squatters' haven. I understand the area is a haven of Quezon City? The area is a haven of squatters who live and sleep there where no fire street. There are a lot of children running about, posing a nuisance to motorists.
Ago Tic, 40, Quezon City

3 causes of traffic in Vito Cruz

Traffic in Vito Cruz is caused by three things. One, jeepneys making for passengers in front of St. Scholastica's College and DLSU; two, pedicabs having their own terminal in front of Jollibee and going against the flow of traffic on the one-way street; and three, traffic police and barangay tanods who allow jeepneys and pedicabs to cause traffic in the area. Can't anyone solve this very simple problem?
Juan, 33, Manila

Wanted: Traffic enforcers on España

Mayor Fred Lim, please prioritize traffic flow on España Boulevard, especially in the morning. Traffic enforcers would be a big help because motorists disregard traffic lights.
Randolph, 27, Manila

Tondo gas stations jack up prices

Gasoline stations located in Tondo standing from Tayuman corner Abad Santos, Rizal, Road, Manila, were later bundled together to increase prices with pulled up prices. They're selling gas at P3 more than current prices in Metro Manila. This has been going on for months. Calling DTI, LTFB, anyone. Please do something about this.
Raul, 36, Manila

Another use for 'wang wang'

Can owners with "wang wang" (blinking lights)" should use it instead as a burglar alarm for their houses so that the whole neighborhood would be alerted in case of a burglary.
Felix, 52, Pasay City

Motorists ignore 'No left turn' sign

At the intersection of Kaybiga, Taytay Road and Ortigas Extension is a big sign that says "No left turn." However, it's largely ignored by motorists, and the police, except when there's a traffic aide present. Near the same spot, jeepneys normally meet at the road at their drivers wait for passengers. This is so irritating.
Tonio, 44, Antipolo City

A challenge for Mayor Lim

Salute P. Bay - "Walang 'wang wang' - walang counter-flow." Paano ngayon yung isang kotse sa taas ng "Kanlaon" at pedicab ng Nagkahiwalay ang daanan at pedestrian ng Manila City ngayon? May magkaiba kaya si Mayor Lim (P. Bay-san)? "No counter, no counter flow." What about the "kalaglag" and pedicabs that are clumped in Quezon and around Blumentritt, City Hall? Can Mayor Lim do something about them?
Manolo Emile, 32, Manila

Traffic light needed at intersection

Attention, MMDA: Please install a traffic light at the intersection of Congressional Avenue, Visayas Avenue and Congressional Ave. Extension. There used to be a traffic light prior to the opening of Congressional Avenue Extension. Traffic flow is chaotic in the area.
Rose, 48, Quezon City

Ear-splitting motorcycle mufflers

Attention, PNP and LTO: With the ongoing drive to enforce peace and order on the streets, can you please include motorcycles with after-market mufflers that are too loud?
Pedro Zabala, 45, Quezon City

Footbridge needed on Mindanao Avenue

The absence of an overpass or footbridge impairs the lives daily of numerous pedestrians, who have to brave crossing Mindanao Avenue to get to Road 20 on Phase 3 Area. The constant flow of traffic and speeding buses, motorbikes and other vehicles at this intersection make crossing on foot perilous, especially at night. To the MMDA, please construct that footbridge immediately.
Cabrera, 38, Quezon City

Another plea for footbridge

Calling the attention of MMDA. Please put up a footbridge on Mindanao Avenue corner Road 20, Barangay Bahay Toro in Quezon City. Mindanao Avenue is not safe for pedestrians crossing.
Rose, 48, Quezon City

Court asked to reconsider ruling against 'Big 3'

By DJ Yap

ONE OF the so-called "Big 3" oil companies has asked a Manila court to reconsider its denial of the company's motion to dismiss on a technicality a civil suit aimed at stopping them from raising the prices of oil products.

In a hearing at the Manila Regional Trial Court Branch 26 on Friday, Petron Corp. asked Judge Silvino Tampilo Jr. to reconsider his July 8 order rejecting its motion to dismiss the case and allowing the petitioner, Social Justice Society (SJS) to submit its pre-trial brief belatedly.

The court is hearing SJS's suit that named the Big 3—Petron, Chevron and Philippine Shell—of price fixing and manipulation.

Petron, in a July 27 motion for reconsideration, said the court erred in entertaining the pre-trial brief of SJS led by lawyer Vladimir Calingasa even though it was filed late and despite the fact that the petitioner failed to appear at the scheduled pre-trial on May 14.

A pre-trial brief is a document stipulating the facts agreed upon by both parties and enumerating the witnesses, among other provisions, which is supposed to be filed with the court three days before the scheduled pre-trial.

Calingasa failed to submit the pre-trial brief within the allowed period. He was also a no-show at the pre-trial although he later asked to be excused by the court.

But Petron chief Secretary S and a of the Rules of Court which says that the "failure of the plaintiff to appear when so required pursuant to the next preceding section shall be cause for dismissal of the action," and "failure to file the pre-trial brief shall have the same effect as failure to appear at the pre-trial."

In its July 8 order, the court took note of Calingasa's excuse and accepted his pre-trial brief that was filed belatedly.

Petron also took SJS to task for failing to serve a copy of its motion to admit the pre-trial brief to the State Branch Head Asuncion A. Lucila Law Firm, which was hired at the later stage of the proceedings to represent Petron.

But Calingasa pointed out that he served a copy of the motion to the in-house counsels who originally represented Petron. He said there was nothing in the rules requiring plaintiffs to serve copies of motions to all representing counsels of the respondents.

The court gave SJS ten days to respond to the motion of Petron, and another 15 days for Petron to file its reply. The Aug. 16 addendum of the pre-trial was cancelled pending the resolution of Petron's motion.

Police official, 6 men exonerated of charges

By Nancy C. Carvajal

A QUEZON CITY police official and six of his men have been cleared of extortion charges which were filed by a suspected drug dealer they arrested last month.

At the same time, Assistant City Prosecutor Ronald Q. Iratipo, in a resolution dated July 19, recommended the filing of charges against John Sec-ting for illegally violating Republic Act 9165 or the Dangerous Drugs Act.

He said was recommended for his temporary liberty.

"[Based on] the video camera showing recitations of [the] dangerous drugs act, evidence should be given to the discretion of the investigator by police officers who are presumed to have performed their duties," Iratipo said in his resolution.

He noted that the witnesses presented by Sec's wife, Jeanette, also failed to identify the policemen who allegedly extorted money from her husband.

Supt. Generoso Mendoza was earlier relieved as station commander of the Quezon City Police District Station 6 as a result of Sec's accusations.

In an affidavit filed by Sec's wife, Mendoza and his men—SPO3 Isidro Torres, SPO1 David Caguioda, PO3 Elden Dino, Chief Insp. Julius Cesar Mirang, PO3 Miguel Gregorio Jr. and PO1 Darwin Dizon—were accused of robbery, kidnapping, qualified theft, car theft and violations of drug law.

Mendoza had denied Sec's accusations.

He said Sec was arrested inside a supermarket on Commonwealth Avenue last month after he tried to sell 56 grams of "shabu" worth P380,000 to an undercover agent.

Sec had been under surveillance for more than a month before his arrest, Mendoza added.

Sec's wife, however, claimed the policemen asked her for P5 million in exchange for charging her husband with a lesser offense.

She also claimed that Mendoza and his men took Sec husband's Pajero, a Rolex watch, P13,000 in cash, cell phones worth P50,000 and a wallet containing his credit and nonexistent teller cards.

Mendoza, meanwhile, expressed relief over the dismissal of the charges against him and his men.

"We always knew the truth would prevail," he told the Inquirer in a phone interview.

PLAY TIME
Volunteers of the Philippine Animal Welfare Society take time off to work to play with dogs rescued off the streets.

MetroBriefs

School advisories now available via SMS

DISTANCE learning when students want to know if classes are cancelled but can't get through the school hotline, wireless technology has an alternative solution. The Smart Infotext service is a two-way SMS-based information system that provides students and parents access to send and receive real-time advisories via SMS broadcasts. To date, over 100 schools nationwide are enrolled in the service which also enables students and parents to access grades, class schedules and calendar of campus events. Aside from news bulletins, the Smart Infotext is also used by schools to conduct campus surveys and get feedback from students and teachers. For details, visit http://smart.com.ph/corporate/categories/schools/smart.html.

Orchid and garden show on Aug. 13 to 23

With global warming becoming a main concern worldwide, the Philippine Orchid Society has adopted the theme, "Protecting our orchids and other ornamentals against climate change" for its 60th Annual Malaysian Orchid and Garden Show from Aug. 13-23 at Manila Seedling Bank at the corner of Edsa and Quezon Avenue in Quezon City. Show-goers will be in the orchids of the orientboat rooted species and the latest hybrids, together with ornamentals set up in beautiful landscaped designs. There will be a commercial section and daily lecture-demonstrations. 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. The lecture-demonstrations are as follows: Aug. 13—Production of orchids by Raul Yapsiongco Jr., Aug. 14—Growing cattleyas and cymbidium orchids (Kenan Perez). Aug. 15—Oriental flower arrangements (Floral Designer's Circle). Aug. 16—Miniature hoya landscape peeping (Mc de Rosal). Aug. 17—Growing vandaceous and phalaenopsis orchids (C.V. Lazaro). Aug. 18—Noteworthy Philippine orchid species (Wally Suarez). Aug. 20—Fertilization and culture gardening (Alfred Botanical Corp.). Aug. 21—Marketing trends in the ornamental industry (Ranjo Bio). Aug. 22—Gardening for a healthy lifestyle (Ming Bell Stanton and Aug. 23—Commercial orchid plants and diseases (Norberto Bautista). For details, call 825-4431 or 897-6402/403.

MMDA in favor of e-vehicles

By Mike Frialde

LOOKING for a way to get around the matter ending scheme of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA)?

Here's one: Buy an electricity-powered vehicle.

MMDA Chair Francis Tolentino yesterday said motorists using the environment-friendly vehicles would be exempted from the Unified Vehicular Volume Reduction Program (UVVRP) as he particularly called on "law owners and operators to shift from fuel-driven buses to those powered by electricity.

At the agency's weekly radio program on dzRB, Tolentino said the move was in line with his vision of improving the quality of air in Metro Manila which is often covered in smog due to vehicles belching pollution.

"It's a way of reducing [gas] emissions and owners to invest in environment-friendly vehicles," the official said in Filipino, referring to the policy which is still being drafted.

"It's a big investment, but nonetheless a good one," he added.

He lamented that the air quality in the capital "was getting worse" every day and that despite the government's attempts to stop the worsening pollution through the apprehension of smoke-belching vehicles, more programs were needed to boost the MMDA's efforts.

"One time, I saw students who coughed continuously with their condition getting worse every day," Tolentino said. "If these are not prevented by their parents or teachers, their condition could develop into pulmonary and respiratory diseases that would be harder to cure."

According to an electric vehicle manufacturer, a 40-passenger electricity-powered bus costs around P1.5 million to P2 million depending on the speed and engine requirements.

Meanwhile, a classified advertisement posted on the Web showed that diesel or gasoline-powered buses retail from P2.5 million to P3 million.

Sean Gerard Gilloris, president and chief executive officer of BlackitWhite Industries Inc., said that electric buses are still cheaper compared to those which run on fuel.

"It's a feasible idea and the returns are huge because it needs less maintenance compared to fuel engines which has more parts," he told the Inquirer in a phone interview, as he pointed out that fuel-powered buses have more parts like transmission and cooling systems which in turn require a lot of maintenance.

Gilloris's firm supplied Taguig City with 2 e-tricycles which ply routes within the city.

Barge strikes boats

STRONG winds caused a barge docked off Bataan to break its moorings and hit several boats and houses on its way to the evening.

The barge which was owned by Young Tenos damaged several houses and about four boats when it crashed into the shore on Davila Street, Tabing Ilog, Barangay Nueva West, at around 8 p.m. on Saturday.

A heavy downpour and strong winds were to blame for the accident which did not cause any injuries, Mayor Ernesto Tenoso, Nueva police chief, said. Briefly 2 Australia

The WORLD

Editor: Lorraine B. Quiroz

96 die, 2,000 missing in China mudslides

BEIJING—At least 96 people were killed and 2,000 missing on Sunday after mudslides swept away homes and destroyed roads in northwestern China as the nation battled its worst flooding in a decade.

At least nine villages were buried under rocks and deep rivers of sludge were hampering rescue efforts in the devastated region of Gansu, where more than 20,000 people have been evacuated, state media said.

Authorities have sent nearly 2,000 soldiers and about 100 medics to help in search and rescue efforts after the landslides in the ethnically Tibetan region triggered by a deluge of more than 5 inches, reports said.

Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao is also traveling to the region, to look for and President Hu Jintao urged rescuers to spare no effort to save lives in the latest natural disaster to strike the economy, the official Xinhua news agency said.

At least 50,000 people have been affected by floods which submerged half of Zhouqu county in one point, Xinhua said, citing Blue Sky Rescue, the head of the affected Gansu prefecture.

The landslides swept road, houses, cars and other debris into a river, sweeping through the county, blocking the water and triggering flooding in the valley, the government said.

One village in the valley was buried in. Rescuers combed in high as three meters in one point, Xinhua said.

Media television broadcast images of local residents walking through mud-choked streets and pictures of buildings swept off their foundations and vehicles partly submerged by mud- to-water.

Other images showed toddlers shovelling mud in their searching for the missing, with reports saying more than 600 people had been rescued so far.

Reports said 76 people have also been injured.

Torrential rains that started on Saturday have now stopped, reports said, but the local weather bureau has forecast more heavy rain in the upper reaches of the Bailong River on Tuesday and Wednesday.

"The water of the Bailong River flowed into the county seat and many people were trapped," said Dhondrupgyong, the head of Zhouqu county.

"Now the danger has become the biggest problem to rescue operations. It's too thick to walk or drive through." Some streets were covered with sludge as deep as one meter, Xinhua said.

An assay in 2008 houses were buried in the landslides which destroyed roads and bridges while telecommunications, water and electricity have been cut in parts of the region, reports said. AFP

THE WOODEN Virgin Mary statue that survived amid the collapsed cloisters and scorched debris of the Nagasaki-type church flattened by an atom bomb explosion on Aug. 9, 1945 AFP

Nagasaki's atom-bombed Madonna becomes peace symbol

By Shingo Ito

NAGASAKI, Japan—When the atom bomb "Fat Boy" devastated Nagasaki 65 years ago on Monday, one of the buildings reduced to rubble was the city's Urakami cathedral—then among the largest churches in Asia.

The blinding nuclear flash that would claim more than 74,000 lives in the city also, in an instant, blew out the stained glass windows of the church, toppled its vaulted roof and reduced its brick bell.

But, as what local Christian followers have likened to a miracle, the heart of a wooden Virgin Mary statue survived amid the collapsed cloisters and scorched debris of the Romanesque church flattened on Aug. 9, 1945.

The appearance of the war-ravaged religious icon is breathing. The Madonna's eyes have become scorched, black holes, the right cheek is charred, and a crack runs like a wrinkle near down her face.

"When I first saw (the damaged statue), I thought the Virgin Mary was crying," said Shigeru Nakahori, a 74-year-old parishioner at the church who remembers the explosion that destroyed the cathedral that is called in Japan's language.

"I thought it's as if the Virgin Mary is telling us about the anxiety of war by its sobbing herself," Nakahori said, quietly gazing at the statue. "This is a significant symbol of peace which should be preserved forever."

The wooden statue of the Virgin Mary have found a new home inside a rebuilt church, also called St. Mary's, built on the ruins of the 1925 stone from the bomb's ground zero.

But the powerful relic has also traveled widely as a symbol of peace—most recently to New York for a UN nuclear disarmament conference in May, when it was also taken to a Mass at the city's St. Patrick's Cathedral.

UN secretary general Ban Ki-moon, who saw the statue in the US city, visited Nagasaki to be installed with it on Thursday before attending a peace memorial ceremony in Hiroshima.

On their way to New York, the Nagasaki religious leaders carried the statue to the Vatican, where it was blessed by Pope Benedict XVI, and to a ceremony in Barcelona, Spain to receive the custom of Nagasaki's sister city there before the statue was carried to the United States.

"We invoked everyone with the statue, with the idea that we would like to ask the Virgin Mary to act for peace," Joseph Mitsuaki Takaura, the archbishop of Nagasaki, said.

"There are many wars to make such an appeal—through pictures, film or narration about the horror—but the atomic-bombed Mary appears to have a different power to tell us about it." Hibaku, a small Japanese pear tree, also survived the explosion in the suburb residential north of the Ede on (1603-1868) when the country remained into seclusion period in.

The Edo era's Tokugawa Shogunate imposed anti-Christian bans on the Jesuits in the early 17th century, repressing Christians and banishing European priests.

Some believers were martyred and others secretly maintained their creed as "hidden Christians" for more than 200 years until Japan reopened to the world as a civil began in the late 19th century.

Some 8,000 local Christians were killed in the Nagasaki bombing. AFP

Kagan now 4th woman to become US justice

WASHINGTON—Elena Kagan was sworn in on Saturday as the 112th justice and fourth woman to serve on the Supreme Court, continuing a gender, moral and demographic transformation of the nation's highest bench.

In keeping with tradition, Kagan first took the constitutional oath given to a noble array of officials and then took the oath administered to those wearing the robe. Joined by family and friends in the Supreme Court building, she swore to "administer justice without respect to persons, and do equal right to the poor and to the rich."

The low-key but historic ceremony came two days after she was confirmed by the Senate and a day after President Barack Obama marked her ascension with a jubilant televised celebration in the East Room of the White House. She was Obama's second successful nominee to the court, and her approval by the Senate was taken as a nod of validation for a White House battered by political and economic troubles.

Succeeding Justice John Paul Stevens, the court's retiring liberal leader, Kagan, 50, presumably will not drastically change the philosophical balance on the divided court. But if she were to serve until she was 90, as Stevens has, she would have four decades to shape the nation's legal outlook. Only four other men who appointed her left the White House. Even a divorce issues would give her time to leave her mark.

Arguably, Kagan made a mark from the moment she took the oaths on Saturday. She is the third woman on the current court, joining justices Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Sonia Sotomayor. She is also the fifth justice born after World War II, making that group a majority and the youngest court the average age on the court to 64, from nearly 69. She is the first person since William H. Rehnquist, 38 years ago, to join the court without any experience as a judge. AFP

Russia accuses US of violating arms pacts

MOSCOW—Russia's Foreign Ministry released a report on Saturday accusing the United States of violating dozens of provisions of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons treaties, going back almost a decade, to refute claims by a senior US official of a new arms treaty who have been accusing Russia of violating past agreements.

The 30-page report detailed lapses in security at Los Alamos National Laboratories, cited reports on security threats posed by privately-owned labs in the US conducting research on potential military pathogens, and noted what it called failures by the US to provide telemetry on test missile launchings.

It also refuted brief compliances that the US and other States accused Russia of violating a 1987 agreement with Russia banning the deployment of troops in former eastern bloc countries, and noted that the American missile defense program employed dozens workers seemingly belonging to a class of missiles banned under a treaty on intermediate range nuclear weapons.

The US responded to the accusations with a terse statement rejecting Moscow's claims. "We have met our obligations under START," said Morgan Morrow, a State Department spokesperson.

The Senate is considering ratification of a new nuclear weapons treaty, called New Start, signed a year ago by President Barack Obama and President Dmitry Medvedev of Russia. The treaty, negotiated by Parties has violated past arms control treaties, at times denying access to inspectors. The report cited several examples disputes but said Russia had lived up to the treaty's "central limits."

The Obama administration had hoped that the treaty would be ratified by this summer, as a first step toward much harder and more sweeping agreement to curb the spread of nuclear weapons. But a Senate committee has delayed a vote until September. AFP

Castro warns US, Israel may attack Iran, trigger nuclear 'holocaust'

HAVANA—Aiding Cuban revolutionary leader Fidel Castro has issued a dire warning of a nuclear "holocaust" as he mustered enough strength to address the country's parliament for the first time since his health crisis four years ago.

The soon-to-be-84 father of the Cuban revolution looked much thinner and more energetic than in previous appearances as he rose to the podium of the National Assembly on Saturday to expound on his views on threats of current days—alleged US preparations for a nuclear war in the Middle East.

In a series of lucubrant articles and public comments, Castro has been talking about his fear that the United States and Israel are determined to launch a nuclear attack on Iran.

With assembly members listening intently, Castro said it would be up to US President Barack Obama to issue an order to carry out such a strike, but that it be realized the consequences of that action. "he would not give it."

"They would have it that at this precise moment...the president of the United States would be on telephoning of an African state and a white woman, of Hillary and Chelsea," Castro said. "Nobody can imagine that he becomes aware of the devastation it would cause."

"We are making a contribution to that paranoiac effort," said the Cuban communist leader.

He stressed that should an attack not be considered, "the entire human world would be under nuclear and would immediately collapse."

According to Castro, Obama's advantage was that he was not comparable to former US President Richard Nixon, who was forced to resign in 1974 amid a political scandal.

CASTRO before lawmakers AP, File

"Nixon was a cynical man," commented the Cuban leader. "That country has had a lot of cynical presidents, as well as many ignorant ones." Castro, who led Cuba for 48 years, was sidelined in 2006 after a gastrointestinal illness and subsequent operations forced him to leave the presidency seat held by his brother Raul Castro, 79.

At one point, Fidel Castro was so frail that he could not stand or walk in public.

His address on Saturday, at times alongside his wife, Dalia Soto del Valle, seemed aimed at underscoring that he was physically back and still in the political fight.

Raul Castro, who turns 84 on June 3, spoke for just over 40 minutes—a fleeting appearance for a politician once famous for his oratory gorgeous by hours.

Castro's last term of a consecutive standing a key event in the Cuban revolution on July 26, his recent's public appearance to three weeks. AFP

Michelle Obama's trip to Spain draws flak

WASHINGTON—A quiet holiday in a lovely Mediterranean retreat for the first lady and her daughters has turned into a bit of shoulder, for a White House trying to battle bad economic news overseas.

Michelle Obama took her youngest daughter, Sasha, to southern Spain this week for a mother-daughter getaway. But when you are married to the president, it has a way of becoming a mother-daughter-boss-bureaucrat getaway that inevitably sweeps into town, takes over much of a private hotel, and leaves the taxpayer with a hefty bill.

The first lady is paying for her own room, food and transportation, and the Secret Service will pay for theirs as well. But the government picks up security costs, and the image of the president's wife enjoying a fancy vacation at a luxury resort abroad while Americans lose their jobs back home struck some as ill-timed. European papers are having a field day mocking her extravagance, a New York Daily News columnist called her "a modern-day Marie Antoinette" and the blogosphere is buzzing.

The White House said it would not comment. "The first lady is on a private trip," Robert Gibbs, the White House press secretary, said this week. "She is a private citizen and is the mother of a daughter on a private trip, and I think I'd leave it at that."

Other officials, asking not to be named because the first family considers it a private matter, said some reports of the trip have been exaggerated. Obama is not traveling with 40 friends, one official said, but with two friends and four of their daughters, as well as a couple of aides and a couple of advance staff members.

The officials would not discuss how many security agents are traveling and said that number is determined not by the first lady, but by the Secret Service. The staff members are present because the first lady is on official business, will price visit to Big Ann Carter and Queen Sofia on Sunday before heading home, they said. She flew in a government plane, as all first ladies do when they travel, but her friends took separate commercial flights.

As for the entourage, she and Sasha, 9, and their friends have toured Granada and played on the beach while staying at the five-star Hotel Villa Padierna in Marbella, where the rooms run from $500 to $2,000 a night. They took in a flamenco show and danced to the music. AFP

OBAMA in southern Spain guarded by Secret Service agents AP

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Ateneo slips past UE; AdU prevails

Surging Falcons edge Green Archers

By Jeanine M. Paya

JUST WHEN it seemed the game was about to slip away, Kris Sedurond provided the offensive spark the Ateneo Blue Eagles needed in the final stretch.

Sedurond hustled to lay siege in the lane and scored the Eagles' last basket of the first round of the 73rd UAAP men's basketball elimination at the Philsports arena.

The victory gave the Eagles a share of second at 5-2 with the Adamson Falcons, whose

SPORTS /A30

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The Power to Surprise

Perpetual gains Shakey's V-League KO duel vs NU

ATTEMPT: Alyssa Valdez hammers one in all National University's Jaja Santiago in yesterday's Shakey's V-League match. NOEL ORAS

By Cedelff Tapay

PERPETUAL HELP forged a playoff for the last quarterfinal spot with a come-from-behind 25-23, 27-25, 15-17, 25-22 victory over St. Benilde yesterday in the Shakey's V-League Season 7 Second Conference at the FEUI Flying V tennis in Sta Rosa.

With strong showing, National University, 25-14, 25-22, 26-24, in the second game, both the Lady Altas and the Lady Bulldogs wound up with 2-1 records at the end of the eliminations round.

The Perpetual-National knockout match is on Sunday with the winner completing the quarterfinal cast along with San Sebastian Recoletos, Ateneo, Adamson, Far Eastern U and Lyceum.

The Lady Eagles gained a share of the lead with San Sebastian at 5-1.

The Lady Altas moved within one win after dropping the first set and trailing by five points midway in the fourth frame.

Reserve player Katherine Claire Bakanke had two aspirations kills as the Lady Altas survived the early storm in the fourth and added to the misery of the Lady Shakers (0-7).

Bakanke shattered a 19-all tie in the fourth set before delivering the game-clinching kill for the Lady Altas, who drew double-digit support from four players.

Another clutch hitter Jessie joined the Lady Altas' early fireworks with fellow player Mica Galanza and Rosemary Jade Cruz contributed 13 and 14, respectively.

April Ann Ira also finished with 12 for the Lady Altas, who churned victorious in its debut, before losing five straight until yesterday.

"We really want to make an impact here," said Perpetual Help coach Rolando Miguel.

Melissa Gohing notched 12 points before being ruled ineligible in the third set, while Angeline Gervacio and Ella Cangate contributed 10 points each as the Lady Eagles scored their third straight victory.

Ateneo's Thai import Samonsuthe Boonyasen only played in the third set but still finished with nine points to easily trounce Gretchen Ho's output.

Ateneo slips past UE; AdU prevails

Viewpage A23

veteran class delivered in the clutch to snip the La Salle Green Archers, 76-68, in the opener.

"Some of these games you just have to get out," said coach Norman Black of the Eagles, who are shooting for a third straight championship.

"We struggled the entire game offensively. Basically it was the two three-point shots of Ily-ia that got us back in the game. It also lifted our spirits a bit, lifted our morale. He really came up big time for us."

Salamat matched his career-high of 23 points, including back-to-back triples that tied the game at 60. It also marked off an interview that also starred Rich Long and Aaron Torres in the final five minutes.

Torres and Salamat finished behind the five Eastern U linemates, who completed a seven-game sweep of the first round Saturday.

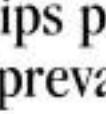
Alex Hayden netted an undergrad stab with only 35 seconds remaining to give the Falcons a 69-68 lead, and the Archers doomed their chances with a couple of turnovers in the dwindling seconds.

Jun Colina had 26 points and eight rebounds to lead the Falconets' comeback from an enemy six-eight points, 44-52, late in the third quarter.

Bea Cantancio hauled 15 points, including a buffer low three with 12.9 seconds left that set the final score. He added eight rebounds and four blocks.

"It was very evident that our defense prevented were La Salle's offense," said Adamson coach Leo Austria. "We were able to stop them for two possessions."

The Falcons posted their best first-round mark since the league implemented the Final Four format in 1994. Their previous best was an 5-2 in 2006.



La Salle slipped to fourth at 4-3, while UE, last year's finalist, wrapped up its first round with a sweet 1-6 card.

Long scored all his 11 points in the third period and Thompson contributed buckets both baskets that kept the Eagles ahead, 77-71, heading into the final minute.

Steve Rebo and Justin Chua rescued up with 13 crucial coach for the Eagles, who collect their 4-3 card.

Arvin Alvarez drilled seven straight points, capped by a triple in a decision run that pushed the Falcons within 63-60.

Two-point Cantancio basket kept the Falcons afloat, 67-66, before Joel Tolentino gave the Archers their last crater of the bind, 68-67.

Adamson finished with 32 points and 57 rebounds.

JOSHUA Webb of La Salle drives off Adamson's John Colina and Lionel Manyara early in the fourth quarter. ROMEO RAZON

UST's Ferrer, Ravena top MVP junior contenders

By Jasmin N. Paje

UNIVERSITY OF Santo Tomas' Kevin Ferrer and Ateneo's Eiker Ravena emerged as the leading MVP contenders in the UAAP juniors basketball tournament last month after teaming up to the under-18 All-Youth Team.

Ferrer, a former MVP, received 41 points (18P) after leading the league in scoring and rebounding of the end of the first round.

The 6-foot-4 Ferrer averaged 23 points, spiked by a season-high 27 in one game—12.1 rebounds and 1.7 blocks to lift the Tiger Cubs to a share of second at 5-2.

Ravena, the oldest son of 6-foot PBA cager Bong, compiled 71 (42-3P) to sweep the championship Eight to a first-round sweep at 7-0.

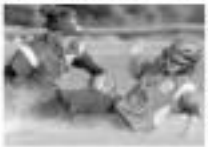
The 18-year-old Ravena posted a third-best 18.9 points aside from averaging 4.3 boards, 4.1 assists and 2.7 steals.

National U's Bogie Ferrer (61.05-5P), Ateneo's Von Pessumal (50-3P) and Jio Revilora (47), Arellio Delfino (36-2P) round out the top five award of the 64-player field organized by Technology Indoor by Imari Bee and Dribbles.

In women's play, defending champ Ateneo and 2002 remained unbeaten in six games after routing opposite foes over the weekend.

Anna Rumohr had 22 points and Amby Mariano collected 20 markers, 18 rebounds and five steals as the Lady Eskrimadors rolled the University of the East, 74-49, Sunday.

Walin Ramirez had 22 points and seven assists to lift the Lady Tams past the University of the Philippines Lady Maroons, 57-46.



HOSHIKA Bolisa (right) sticks safety into second base.

Manila softbelles rout Puerto Rico, stay alive

SLOWLY HITTING top form, Team Manila overpowered Little American squad San Juan, Puerto Rico, 7-0, Saturday to keep its title hopes alive in the 2010 Big League (16-18) Softball World Series at the Bandenberg Park in Kalamazoo, Michigan.

Jodie Marie Abuyo produced a no-hit, no-run, four-inning relief effort as veteran Bolisa gave up four hits to three innings as the Manila softbelles soared their second straight victory to remain in contention.

Playing the second of six must-win games, the Filipinos, backed by the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office and Gobierno Distrito Port Dulce, to found to secure hoping alcance at 4-0 in the final inning en route to the one-hit victory that put them in a tie for fourth with the US East squad from Delaware.

After beating to Ub Central squad Grand Rapids, 1-2, and US Southeast team Florida, 4-7, in their first two games, the Manila softbelles clash with Ub East today with the loser losing its championship hopes goodbye.

Host Kalamazoo, Grand Rapids and West Missouri of Louisiana remain unbeaten in four games.

Kalamazoo, which Manila will face on Monday, is the lone unbeaten left now.

Vivi Monzon, the Manila softbelles' opponents on Tuesday, is haunted by the team that took the title in the Senior League (19-16) World Series.

Abadon Francisco and Michelle Sinsuangsay helped two late runs and accounted for four outs as they are headed Manila's strong start. GERRY P. RAMOS

SPORTSWATCH

Abap's training camp in US up at Forum

THE TRAINING camp the Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines (Abap) will be holding in the United States from this week's discussions the PBA Forum at Shakey's Malate.

Abap executive director Ed Picson and coaches Pat Gaspi and Ricel Incar will announce the boxers' picks.

Joining the boxing people at the session slated for 2PM (sports Radio 918) and presided by Delfin Gallaza, Picson, Incar and Shakey's are organizers of the 2010 Petron Ladies Beach Volleyball Tournament and officials of the Universities and Colleges Athletic Association (UCAA).

Meaning the Jubai beach collected most on Tony Mundo and Rep. Leopoldo Bataoil of the second district of Pangasinan, which will be hosting the first leg of the meet.

Meanwhile, UCAA president Cesar Hagos of host school Dhsonly College and members of the collegiate leagues' board are going to speak about the coming 28th season of the tournament.

'Matchmaker' derby fires off at MC today

SCOTTS, the revolving wagon Mister Monday's coed light enthusiasts can still expect more than 10 lights in Mister Monday's Matchmaker 3-Coed Derby starting at 8 a.m. today.

The champion will receive P150,000 to guarantee prize awards to Mabuti Collateral underbidders Jimmy Dimayuga and Mike de Jesus who are hosting the event.

Meanwhile, promoters Jim Orbita, Rudy Salud and ESM group of the NFL Sports and Amusement Corp. announced yesterday the launch of 2010 PLAY (Highlights of the Year) Tour. Non-members of the Pinoy Dealers Association of the Philippines may join, said Orbita.

Two leading dealers are scheduled on Sept. 11 and 12, Oct. 4, 11 and 25, Competition on Oct. 31 is "Big Event" slugfest.

For inquiries, call 568-7898, 720-7749 or 3606-2602/03.

Passing a heart examination

THE MAKEYS. T-League has continued to draw the volleyball faithful, even without its perennial powers University of Santo Tomas and La Salle.

The insertion of seemingly unexpected guest players in some lineups has sustained interest in the seven-year-old, school-based tournament.

Take for example sophomore UST setter Hiroy Sison Delos, who was added to an already stellar and athletic Lyceum roster, as veterans all-around player Michelle Cordero who was brought into the Far Eastern U team that's trying to extend itself.

What's more, the league has never wanted in college spirit. The games are competitive, regardless of the edge of teams like San Sebastian and Adamson in personnel and experience.

Also, the nature of the game adds to the mix as the point is to keep the ball in play while forcing the other side to bungle it or be out of position. The rooters the audience that has students in big batches in small groups, along with the usual volleyball crowd of family, friends and significant others.

Take for instance that College of St. Benilde Artsers game played on a rainy Thursday last week. The Lady Blazers were in the wilting wilders in five previous starts and hoping to win their last two games for a chance to choose to make it to the quarterfinal round.

Artsers was hosting a better season with three wins and looking every inch a qualifier with a fiery Thai import named Samonsuthe Boonyasen and a lineup that was running more experienced playing together.

Not Benilde's star thrill of this game. The downside that the Lady Blazers were in didn't seem to matter and they played with fire to win of their best games ever.

On this day, St. Benilde displayed the passion and heart that coach Thelma Bustos-Rojas had been asking for in previous games. A member of the 1994 SEA Games Philippines women's team that won the volleyball gold, Bustos-Rojas witnessed the lessons learned, regardless of the score, all season long.

And the rooms was more outpouring in their backings. Veterans Glen Tanseng, Jared 23 points and a game-two face that could die did not want to lose that day.

The rest of the team responded with the as well. Senior Ben Agoto earned 40 scoring opportunities by Wanning and Cindy Ogbinar who scored 16.

The Lady Blazers soared confidence and belief that they even managed to sneak in a laugh as a consequence. In the fifth set, Jo-Ann Bustillo, Benita-Rojas yelled out both the Agoto take-over just to fan both.

It was like adding for your coach who's actually beside you and you're hollering at the top of your voice. Benita-Rojas and her team laughed at the silliness of it all.

If you've been following your court and humor in the heat of battle, then you've probably never focused than more people would like to think.

St. Benilde lost the game in the fifth, 27-25, but Benita-Rojas rose and smiled with the satisfaction of a teacher who find just how her students grapple with a tough exam and emerge positive somewhere gained.

That same lesson lost the battle and won't still wonders but they finally were feeling pain in the heart and passion parts of the feet.

Legaspi seizes 4th US Kids World title

LEGASPI: Winner by a stroke over Uffner.

FILIPINO JUNIOR golf ace Miko Legaspi rallied from three strokes down with a closing 71 on Saturday (Sunday in Manila) to capture the gold U-13 year division title—her fourth US Kids World Championship crown—in Pinehurst, North Carolina.

Legaspi finished with a 224 aggregate after rather rounds of 75 and 68, leading overnight leader Haley Moore of the United States by a stroke.

Moore scored 71 and 76 in the first two rounds but fell back to a 74 for 215.

Legaspi, who prevailed over a division that drew 72 entries, moved one win from tying the record haul of five titles established by another Filipino golf ace Dottie Ardina from 2002-06.

Second straight crown

It was the second straight title in as many weeks for Legaspi, who also topped the girls' 13-11 division in the Optimist International at the PGA National Resort Club in Palm Beach, Florida.

And Ely and Mikaela Bonifer Bonham bagged second place in their respective divisions for the Junior Golf Foundation of the Philippines-sponsored event.

Ely lost to Tim Paris Jackson in a sudden-death playoff for the boys' 9 years-and-under plate.

Ely, four strokes behind the pace after two rounds, tied Jackson with a nine-hole effort of 31 but was out of luck in the playoff, settling for another runner-up finish after the Junior World in San Diego last month.

Fortunato's 167 aggregate left her five shots behind the eventual winner in the girls' 9 years category.

"GREAT SWING!" A recuperating Tiger Woods hit a golf ball after a poor approach shot at Firestone Country Club. AP

Tiger's game in shambles: G'bye No. 1?

AKRON, OHIO—Tiger Woods logged another unbearable round and then all but conceded the world No. 1 ranking to Phil Mickelson.

In the third round of the Bridgestone Invitational on Saturday, Woods had four bogeys, a double bogey and two birdies in a 5-over-par 75. He is 13 strokes—an eternity in relation to par through 54 holes since turning professional in 1996.

Woods, whose personal life has been in torment since revelations of infidelity last November, has been the No. 1-ranked golfer in the world for more than five years. But Mickelson can overtake him with a high finish—something that Woods fully expects.

"Well, I'm not playing that well," Woods said. "I'm playing like crap. I'm not playing well. I'll be No. 1." Woods said after completing play at Firestone Country Club.

Mickelson shot a 71 to tie him at 6-under for 10th. He needs to finish at least in fourth place alone to become No. 1.

Jason Dufner and Ryan Palmer kept things at bay and making birdies until they wound up tied for third at 5-under par.

Palmer birdied three of his last five holes for a 69. Dufner made an eagle early in his round and found confidence late with a wedge to a

Philippine Star Daily Inquirer

Eastridge halts Orchard's Fed golf streak

STANDINGS (After Less Than Seven)

Group I—Forest Hills 4-1-0 (2 Korea 1-2-1, 6 Malaya 3-1-0, 7 Ilo Ilos 2-4-0), Ilocos 1-3-0

Group L—Antipolo 4-1-1 (2 United 1-1-0, 11 Gateway 2-0-1, Southwoods 2-0-1), Virginia 1-3-0

Group K—Cebu 3-1-1 (4 United 2-1-1, Northern Cebu 2-2-1), Diamond 0-1-1

EASTRIDGE ENDED the five-match winning streak of Orchard in impressive fashion, posting a 4-1-0-5 victory over early to mid-round to a near berth in the playoff rounds of the 2010 Metro Pacific Investments Golf League.

After suffering their first loss from the same team Eastridge took a measure of revenge and made sure Orchard did it with a resulting victory for an entire point that installed the Rizal-area golfers the new point leaders in the league.

Eastridge improved to 12 points after the eighth week of home-and-away matches, one up on Orchard, which had clinched bottom-rung and Guadalupe in its first two outings.

In Group 1, Forest Hills continued to show the way after plastering defending champion Ilo Ilonas, 5-0, at home to its sixth game.

Forest Hills won for the fourth time in five outings for 10 points including the same point from its Ilo Ilonas sweep and will play its re-scheduled match with Alabang today.

Alabang, which is in third place with 7 points behind Forest's 8, needs a good result from its games against Forest Hills and Ilo Ilonas to tie the fight for one of the two playoff berths in their division.

The pace in Group 3 remains tight with all four clubs still very much in contention. Valley leads at 8 points, just a point clear of Royal Woodwoods and Black Watch, while Sherwood Hills has 5.

Sherwood battles Valley and Wish Wash tackles Southwoods in matches that will decide the playoff qualifiers in their group.

In Group 1, Ilo Ilonas plays Alabang and Forest's goes up against Forest Hills while in Group 2, Sagayoy collides with Orchard and Southwoods meets Eastridge.

Alexander upends tough Kotelnik

ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI—American Devon Alexander kept his WBC and IBF junior welterweight titles with a unanimous 12-round win over Andriy Kotelnik of the Ukraine on Saturday.

The 23-year-old Alexander (23-0) won 116-112 on all three cards. He's now won eight fights in a row by technical knockout since losing to 31-year-old Kotelnik (31-4-1), a former WBA super lightweight champion.

Alexander suffered a deep cut over his right eye in the 10th round but was able to keep away from Kotelnik long enough to avoid the decision. He hopes to face fellow title holder Timothy Bradley (26-0) in a battle of unbeaten 140-pound fighters in January.

"I thought I did enough to win," Alexander said. "It was an OK performance. He was tough to nail, give him credit."

Kotelnik, a southpaw, used a slick and tall method. To each opponent only in the fight. He was the more active fighter and had a 3,333-702 edge in punches thrown during the 12 rounds.

Kotelnik, 31, earned a nod above Alexander's right eye in the fifth. The cut opened further in the 10th, forcing Alexander to

DEVON Alexander (right) throws a left against Andriy Kotelnik during their WBC, IBF I-W bouts fight in St. Louis, Missouri. AP

keep on about the stretch.

Kotelnik, a close outsider at the 2000 Olympics, won three of the last four rounds on one judge's card and two of the last four on the other two.

Earlier, IBF light heavyweight champion Tavoris Cloud of the US successfully defended his crown with a hard-earned unanimous decision victory American Gabe Johnson.

AP

Bank Name

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST (CONSULTANCY SERVICES)

Country: PHILIPPINES
Name of Project: Manila Third Sewerage Project (MTSP)
Sector: Water and Environment
Contract Name: [illegible]
Loan No.: 7511-PH
Project ID No.: [illegible]

Manila Water Company, Inc. (MWC) has received financing from the World Bank in the amount of US$ 84 million to be utilized for the Manila Third Sewerage Project (MTSP), part of the proceeds of which will be applied towards payments under this contract for Consulting Services. The project is now awaiting [illegible] the Operator] are widely described as follows:

A Quantitative Market Research to Establishing Wastewater Awareness 2018.

Strategic Objectives	To determine the demographics and psychographics of Manila Water customers and their attitudes towards wastewater and the environment; that will serve as a basis for the development of an effective Information Education and Communication (IEC) campaign for wastewater awareness and user rehabilitation
General Scope	Conduct of a Quantitative Market Research Study 1. To generate key inputs for the development of an effective wastewater IEC campaign 2. To develop baseline metrics from which to compare and measure post-campaign success of IEC campaigns
Project Coverage	Key Manila Water customers from in eight (8) cities and municipalities (as do in Metro Manila and two (2) in expansion areas)
Delivery period	Estimated one (1) month to commence two (2) days from receipt of notice to proceed

MWCI hereby invites eligible consultants to indicate their interest in providing the Services. Interested eligible consultants must provide information of interest (EOI) for the above services, together with the documentary requirements that will establish their eligibility to participate in the bidding of eligibility requirements. MWCI's eligibility requirements for the project may be downloaded at the MWCI website at http://www.manilawater.com

In accordance with the guidelines in accordance with the procurement law set in the World Bank's Guidelines: Selection and Employment of Consultants by World Bank Borrowers (current edition).

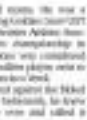
Interested consultants may obtain further information at the address below during office hours (8:00 to 17:00 hours, Monday to Friday).

Expressions of interest and complete Eligibility Documents must be delivered to the address below on or before 30 August 2018. Submission of EOI via email will be allowed for Eligibility Documents should be in hard copies.

[illegible]
MS. CHRISTINA F. ESTANISLAO
In charge: Contracts & Vendor Management Department
Manila Water Company, Inc.
Corporate Center, MWSS Administration Building
489 Katipunan Road, Balara, Quezon City 1105
Telephone No.: (632) 917-5900 loc. 1417
E-mail: [illegible]

(PNA) Aug. 13-15 (EOI)

Former POC head Malonso ailing



CLEAN LIVING

Hernando R. Ibiga

BEHIND Col. Jaime Jose Malonso, nineteen-former president of the Philippine Olympic Committee and sports czar, is ailing.

The thought rule he is 6-2. If health was his forte from my round because he never fails to answer people with his trademark and unbeatable energy. The fact that he reached him was a couple of years back so to remember asked me to write the memorial by his book, "My Memories," which really more unforgettable chronicle in his life, just couldn't bring myself to do it.

Born in Buenos, Manila, on Dec. 25, 1923, Malonso earned his degree of name by being a "working correspondent" for an out-and-out Olympic power who is that most against government interventions in amateur sports. Malonso is the one-day happiest who ever-stated men in.

For the most part of his life, Malonso was a Spanish professor and PE director at the Ateneo de San Juan de Letran. He also served as president of the Manila Catholic Athletic Association in 1948 and headed the Gymnastics Association of the Philippines for many years, the last in 2003 success last in 1973.

Malonso was elected in 1972 as first vice president of the defense Philippine Amateur Athletic Federation, forerunner of the Philippine Olympic Committee, achieving his crowning glory by becoming the POC president in 1988. He was reelected in the Lenox Jones Hall of Fame in 1997.

During his college days, Malonso played in name for the University of Santo Tomas and Julio Garcia, have been egging me to write more articles about the outstanding athletes of the the Eastern taxonomy during the good old days.

Make [Alex enough], " Lenox said.

After serving one my old PEC records, I was able to list down at least some of the school's great athletes of the past and present.

In basketball, HE constituted several players to the Dimapilis, Arlan Iramot and MIC [Asian Basketball Confederation] Tony more Andy de la Cruz, Edgardo "Ding" Fulgencio and Marcelo Acuzera (1948 Lenden Olympics), Meliton Santos and Jose Gochangco [1952 Helsinki], Cesar Cruz (1960 Rome) and Arturo Valenzuela, Eugenio de "Boy" Ignacio and Manny Ancheta (1964 pre-Olympics in Wiesbaden, Japan).

Ret and Amadeo, who became a member in Milan, Laguna, represented HE in the 1954 Pre-Ed Basketball Championship in the de Guzman, Brazil, where the Philippines won a record setting third place.

Other great-and-gold-shirted Tamaraw stars were former Philippine Basketball Association (PBA) coach Shawn Antonio, who starred the 80's when in the 1990 Bangkok Asian Games and teammate "Ingin" Ancheta, who played two years in both the NCAA and UAAP tournaments in the 1980s.

Another former to also making waves in the PBA as a mainstay of Barangay Ginebra

[To be continued]

Editor Teddyvic S. Melendres
Assistant Editor Francis T.J. Ortuoste

SPORTS

Lebanese whip RP cagers anew

By Jose Mazuera

LEBANON HOT shoes the Smart Gilas Philippines five with the same weapons it used to their last meeting, scoring a 74-59 win at the start of the Fiba Asia Stankovic Cup in Beirut on Saturday night.

Playmaker Rony Rahal buried five of Lebanon's 10 three-pointers as the host country got off to a confident start in Group B action of the tournament, which offers three automatic spots to the 2011 Fiba Asia Championship.

Rahal finished with 22 points as he displanted the fiery showing of Ellis Stephens, who drilled home five straight threes in a come-from-behind winning effort against the Filipinos in the Phillies Jones Cup in September last month.

Lebanese Canadian Ali Mahmoud and Ghaleb Beda came up with 12 points each to make up for the inefficiency of Filipinos Jackson Vroman and Fadi El Khatib.

Ati Jaidnes held the high-scoring Vroman, a 6-foot-10 naturalized Lebanese who once played in the NBA, to just seven points while scoring seven points himself on top of eight rebounds, two steals and an assist in 32 minutes.

The 6-foot-9 Jaidnes was tutored by the Coca-Cola Tigers and the PBA in the national team to fill the spot of naturalization candidate Marcus Douthit, who has yet to secure his Philippine passport.

JP Calma joined Setiart Gilas with 13 points and Marc Barroca added 11 for the Filipinos, whose first stint with the Lebanese exploded by getting 16 points from the free throw line.

Aside from team captain Chris Tiu and Calma, guards Mark Barroca and Rhenzo Lauzon, the team's best-seeing defenders, also finished out.

Rahal's 17 points, highlighted by back-to-back triples in the first half, put the Lebanese in control.

Smart Gilas came within nine points, 40-31, in the third period but a series of turnovers and coach Fejiko Narazaki's feud-saddled rotations just couldn't sustain the effort.

El Khatib, Lebanon's basketball hero, came out of retirement in years four points, grab six rebounds, issue three assists and get a steal and a block for the Filipinos' lone triple-digit output.

Smart Gilas was playing Syria in preseries. The Filipinos take on defending-champion Jordan tonight before closing their elimination-round stint against Qatar tomorrow.

The scores:

LEBANON 74 – Rahal 22, Beda 12, Mahmoud 12, Fahrudeen 7, Ayman 7, Zeaiter 5, El Khatib 4, Chamseddine 3, Zaiter 2, El Hajj 0, Jaidnes 0.

PHILIPPINES 59 – Calma 13, Barroca 11, Abueva 8, Yeban 7, Barroca 7, Lassiter 5, Tiu 5, Salvacion 3.

Halftime: 39-31, 53-45, 57-42, 74-59

Injured Mendoza shows worth for Team Asia netters

FILIPINO JUNIOR tennis ace Jeremy Dimaculangan backed up injury to gain the boys' doubles finals with his brother partner and win the singles consolation championship in the fifth and final leg of the 14-under Europe Tour over the weekend in Hasselt, Belgium.

Playing for Team Asia, the 14-year-old Ilocanan, who won from the age-group tournaments in Subic or the top of the national rankings, doubled Omar Gamal El Din of Egypt, 6-3, 6-4, in the finals of the consolation round.

In the doubles, Mendoza teamed up with Basil Khanna of India to score a series of upsets before bowing to fourth-seeds Gilles Arnaiz De Carpentier of Brazil and Pedro Ianuzelli Dos Santos of Brazil, 6-3, 7-6, in the finals.

Mendoza and Khanna pulled the rug from under second seeds Dimitrios Zarifi and Jacopo Stefanini of Italy in the quarterfinals, 6-3, 6-1, before stunning Germans Ludwig Wirtzig and Niklas Schiel 7-6(4) in the semifinals, 6-3, 7-5.

Mendoza and Khanna got their campaign going with a 7-5, 6-7, 11-9 win over No. 7 Clement Geens and Arnaud Kountzakakis of Belgium in the first round, before eliminating Gallagher Travers and Jack Hancock of Great Britain, 6-1, 6-0, in the second round.

Filipino mentor Roland Kunz, the ITF Asia coach, said Mendoza suffered a tear in his groin during the third leg in France. He had to sit out in the fourth stage in Cologne, Germany.

"He was 70 percent ready to play last week, but I thought it was better for him to rest and fully recover rather than risk further injury," said Kunz in an e-mail.

But the Filipino was racing to see action in the last leg and was fielded for Team Asia.

Mendoza lost to 10th seed and Europe's No. 59 Sander Arends of Belarus in the first round, 6-2, 6-3, but he won all four of his consolation-round matches to take the crown.

Before bearing El Om in the finals, Mendoza eliminated Maciej Smolyanski of Poland, 6-1, 6-1, Marc Blancmenaux of France, 6-0, 6-0, and Momin Pirchalie of Tunisia, 6-2, 6-0.

Alan Anthony Ayes

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TOMI Levinen and Globe Pacheco Jose Jewels clear the final hurdle on the way to a comprehensive victory in Kuang, Malaysia.

Leviste rules Malaysian Open

A NEAR-PERFECT performance propelled Filipino equestrienne Toni Leviste to another international crown recently.

Riding a 10-year-old Swedish Warmblood mare named Globe Pacheco Jose Jewels, the former Olympian hurled a four-faults clean and unbeaten course in 73 seconds to the 20 Equestrian grounds in Kuang, Malaysia.

Leviste, the only Filipina and Southeast Asian rider to compete in showjumping's three major events—Olympic Games, World Championships and World Cup Finals, won a runner-at-work over the rough course designed by German Werner Deeg, clearing the first round with no time faults.

In the second jump-off round, Leviste moved Jose Jewels to an impressive clocking of 23.28 seconds to prominent her two-toppling performances.

"I am just so happy to be out in the field competing for the country again," said Leviste, who is now competing in the Mendeka Masters, also in Malaysia.

Helena Gutenbrunner of Sweden was a far second behind Leviste by clocking 30.22 seconds in the jump-off with Malaysian Siti Nabil Ismail (51.11) ending up third.

Clark Meyer of Switzerland and Mary Rose Hanson of the United States round out the top-5.

Leviste, a member of the national squad that won the team gold in the 2005 Southeast Asian Games, topped the Mendeka Masters in 2006.

After taking a year-long break, Leviste returned to training early this year to Belgium under the tutelage of Jos Rumps and Jeremy Van Hemelen.

The two Belgian coaches are helping the two-time World Cup competitor prepare for the Asian Games in Guangzhou, China, in November. *Cedelf F. Dipon*

TRS-Castrol 1-2 in Clark drifting

MEXICO CITY ace driver Mike Toanca and Ken Ongpauco steered TRS-Castrol Drift Team to a splendid 1-2 finish in the Amateur division of the Lancer Drift Championship 2006 at the Clark International Speedway recently.

Barely two years after making its debut, the TRS-Castrol Drift Team has evolved into one of the top competitor squads in the drifting circuit with its top two drivers' excellent form.

Toanca, who topped the qualifying round with a quick drift of 59 kilometers per hour, was unchallenged to quiet over Ongpauco, who was four-third place in the qualifying to pip eventual third placer Norman Agoto on board a Nissan Skyline.

With the victory, Toanca secured the overall lead in the Amateur slide-race with 306 points, 25 clear of the second-running Agoto (281).

Ongpauco by third overall with 277.5 points, followed by Mark Bonn (260) and decathlon personality Ryan Ignacillo (194).

TRS-Castrol Drift Team created a sensation in the drifting scene last year by fielding the world's first ever domestically-built pick-up truck, the Mazda BT50.

"We're quite happy with the exciting excellence of the Mazda BT50 Drift Truck and this win-to-ply proved its competitive quality against other four-tool cars," said Mike Toanca, TRS vice president of operations.

The competition was supported by Castrol, Goodyear, Mazda, Cobe Tires, Speedlab, Brits Wheels, Starbright Bodyshop, Pioneer 8, Discovery Suites, Firstmall, ORB Oakley, Signal and O Magazine.

MIKE Toanca and his powerful Mazda BT-50 de-filing machine

RP rowers seek PSC cash pledge

THE WORLD-RANKED national rowing team urgently needs financial assistance to remain in preparations for the Guangzhou Asian Games.

National rowing president Ben Jamin Ramos and coach Ed Marcia yesterday said the Philippine Sports Commission under former chair Harry Angping promised support, but they never see sure if the new PSC leadership would honor its commitments.

The rowers need funds to upgrade their equipment and to give team members better training.

Olympian Benjie Tolentino is joining the individual events while Alvin Amposta and Roque Alvin Jr. are seeing action in the double-rowers of the Asiad.

The country's dragonboat squads are also debuting in the Asiad against top teams like China.

Steve Silva, Contributor

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DepEd backs Guinness record swim bid

THE PHILIPPINES' bid to break the Guinness World Record for the most number of swimmers in a nonstop 24-hour marathon relay has gained headway with the Department of Education's support to the Peace and Unity Swim slated Dec. 10 and 11 at the Ultimate Preparatory School on Commonwealth Avenue, Quezon City.

In an advisory dated July 26, the DepEd enjoined its officials and personnel to join the epic event under the government's principle of "one nation, one mission, common values, common goals, different strengths."

The marathon relay aims to break the Guinness record, now held by Italy for the most number of swimmers in an 18.5-meter swimming pool during a 24-hour period.

Former senator Nikki Coseteng, president and CEO of the BPI, and the Susan Papa Swimming Academy are spearheading the aquatic event, whose primary aim is to bring together all sectors of society to an important activity in a show of peace and unity.

"The event aims to impart the concept of swimming as a complete, injury-free sport, which Filipinos must learn and enjoy as a physical activity because we are nations of islands," said Coseteng. "The event is an important occasion for all swimmers to demonstrate their spirit of unity and peace through sports."

The latest Guinness record, set last June, involved 3,024 participants who cover the same distance in 24 hours.

Editor Raul G. Manuelo • Assistant Editor Connie S. Martinez

BUSINESS

'11 budget proposal cut to ₱1.645T

Aquino economic managers also reduced deficit program by P8.6B

By Norman P. Domingo

THE NEW team of government economic managers has pared down the proposed budget for 2014, foregoing planned allocations worth P112 billion as it continues to find ways to avoid excessive spending.

The Development Budget Coordinating Committee agreed on Friday to reduce the previously planned ₱1.757 trillion budget next year to ₱1.645 trillion.

DBCC data also showed that the Cabinet-level committee had slashed the budget deficit program for 2014 from ₱506.4 billion, which was set last month, to ₱395 billion.

Finance Undersecretary Gil A. Beltran said in an interview that while the proposed budget was still an ongoing process, it would be the latest numbers that would reach the desk of President Benigno Aquino III.

» AUGUST 6A

INDICATORS

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44.890

STOCK MARKET
Aug. 2, 2013
▼ 4.93

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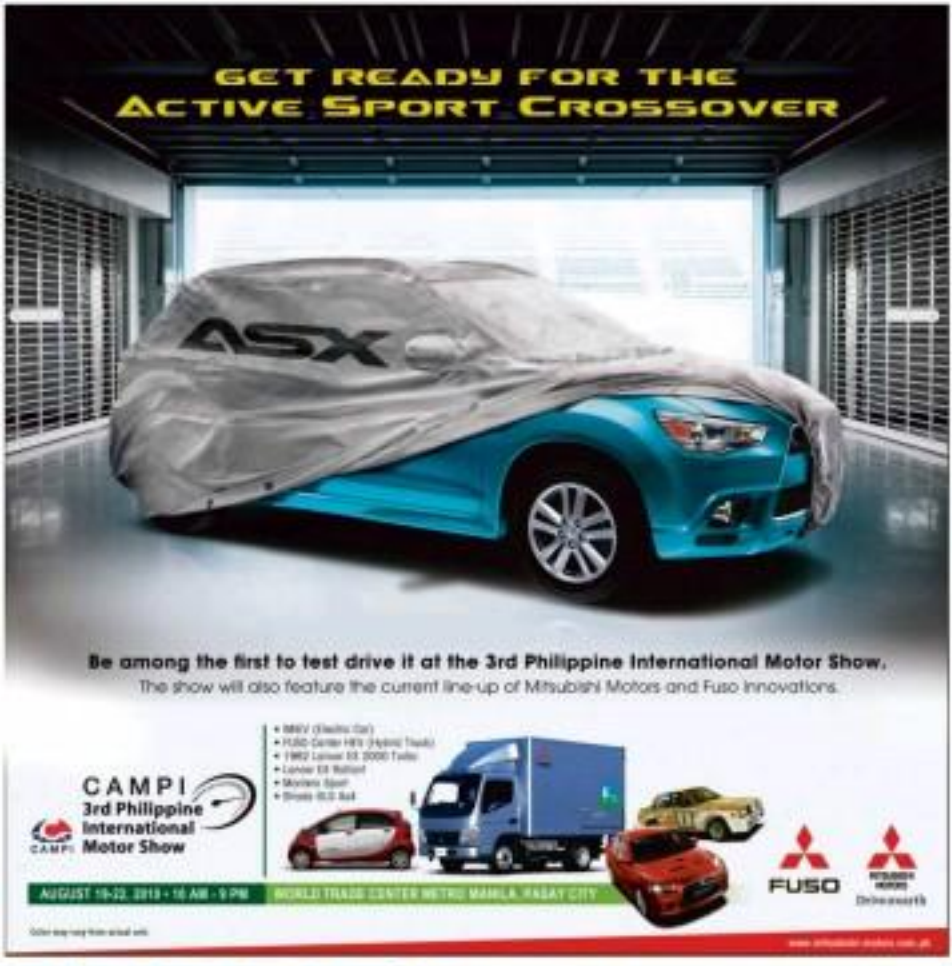
■ **First Gen makes good on P5B bond payment** /B8
■ **June factory prices in 14-month downtrend** /B13
■ **Wall St. to keep close eye on key Fed talks** /B20



Looking for a 'bridge'

SESSION, ORE Dazz sources periodically complain about or distrust the fortunes of a well-known smuggler who has always managed to get away unscathed by authorities, thanks to his generous payments to several top government officials.

According to a source, the businessman has succeeded in paying off high-ranking officials through the Finance, Estrada and Arroyo administrations. So there is little time even from the election.

Page sure set he has offered ₱50 billion to Aiwa than ₱500 million for the same kind of protection he secured in the past.

Unfortunately for him, P-Noy refused the money and so this businessman is now re-trying books so to refurbish the authorities refused done.

He has been searching night and day for a line or a connection to the new President, but has so far failed.

Given the seeming seriousness of the government's anti-smuggling campaign, he could very well be charged very soon.

Of late, the businessman has been on a huge expansion drive at his consumer goods store, causing problems to retailers including some big guys in the industry.

This businessman is also known to slide down a lot of his goods at very low prices because of smuggling.

Will he find a "bridge" to the President? Or will we see him in jail soon? — Margie Quiniquito-Reyes

Rekindling IPO

CEBEX is increasing expectations in the market that the beleaguered Cebu Air Inc.—the operator of budget carrier Cebu Pacific—may revive its stalled public offering plans pretty soon. The IPO was originally slated for April but Cebu Air had said first during the start-up in the power distribution business.

Cebu Air's proposed offering worth P22.36 billion to P25.7 billion, is the biggest IPO planned in the local bourse in the years. A big portion of the offer is comprised of secondary shares, proceeds from which parent JG Summit Holdings can use for expansion, such as if it wins the bidding for San Miguel Para Pasado Co.

There is no better time to finally launch an this IPO than now, with the stock market on a roll, stock jumbo say. And with its major competitor under siege at the moment, it's seen as the as-it-could time to quash opposition to secure its for Cebu Air. — Dawn C. Bueno

PAL reacting

ONE of our snips from Malacañang is lamenting the "mishandling" by government officials of the meeting called last week to discuss the issue on the alleged illegal engagement of 25 Philippine airlines pilots.

The meeting was supposed to be between Senate and Cabinet officials on one hand, and PAL executives, on the other with the latter expected to present their side of the story and how government could help the carrier.

To the surprise of everyone in the meeting, however, Cebu Pacific officials led by Lance Gokongwei were present during the supposed exclusive meeting with Executive Secretary Eugenio Ochoa (who and Deputy ED Jose Amorsolo in his stead).

According to the source, the PAL executives were caught off guard, with many of them hoping to have their say first in the presence of the competitor.

As a result, nothing concrete came out of the meeting except for PAL appeal to the government to have their say first in the presence of the competitor.

As a result, nothing concrete came out of the meeting except for PAL appeal to the government to help convince the erring pilots to return to work and focus on their contracts. — Dennis L. Jaucian

Airline tit for tat

SPEAKING of that meeting, another source pointed first said some Cebu Pacific officials were angry with Cebu Pacific over what they think PAL was fixing? Lance Gokongwei's response was that the budget airline created its employees better, which is why its pilots don't fly the coop all of a sudden, lower-pay notwithstanding.

To this, PAL president Jaime Bautista inherited that PAL pilots were more talented and experienced, hence, the greater demand for them in the end. — Nestle Mendiola

'Paper' company

TONGSONG are tugging within the Filipino-Chinese business community about the businessmen who is aggressively pushing the rebirth to oversee fellow Chinese to vote for him in front of their organization.

One sources from the group say this businessman has a hot-

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LAS PIÑAS

MAKATI

MANILA

MUNTINLUPA

PARANAQUE

QUEZON CITY

VALENZUELA

LUZON

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CAVITE

LAGUNA

PANGASINAN

RIZAL

TARLAC

MINDANAO

GENERAL SANTOS

ZAMBOANGA

'11 budget proposal . . .

From page B1

Hontiveros last until Aug. 23 to submit to Congress its proposal for the National Appropriations Act (GAA) of 2011.

Bolton declined to provide details about which allocations the DBCC had removed, saying only that government must prioritize projects on how continuously putting as long boom to prepare the budget proposal for next year.

The base DBCC budget figure translates to a 6.6-percent increase to P1.54 trillion in 2011—lower than the nine-fold target increase in the recapitulation Gloria.

Also, the latest budget deficit ceiling for next year is 3.6-percent lower than the rejected P420-billion gap the year.

The 3.2 percent of the gross domestic product, the 2011 deficit program brings the Aquino administration closer to its goal of limiting deficit spending to around 2 percent of GDP.

Budget Secretary Florencio B. Abad last month told the progressed increase in the budget deficit to address the lack of investment in basic social services, particularly in education and internal health.

Abad said a bigger budget for next year would make up for the dearth of spending for economic services, such as power infrastructure and transportation systems, in the previous years.

"Under investment in these sectors undermines the ability of the Philippines to compete," he said. "We should have our economy and exports and have longer period roads per vehicle."

MetroPac investment in SCTEx to hit P20B

By Doris C. Dumlao

BOBONG BOHOL—The Metro Pacific group has committed to invest a total of P20 billion in the country's largest toll-road, Subic-Clark-Tarlac Expressway (SCTEx), over its 35-year concession deal with the government.

Metro Pacific Tollways Corp. (MPTC), the holding firm for all toll-related businesses of Metro Pacific Investments Corp., is also exploring expressway projects in Central Luzon in support of the new administration's strategy to boost the national road system alongside calls for public-private sector partnerships in infrastructure building.

In a briefing, MPTC president Ramoncito Fernandez said the concession agreement with the state-owned Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority was targeted to start on Oct. 1.

The BCDA awarded to Manila North Tollways Corp., MPTC's unit operating the North Luzon Expressway concession, the right to enter into a concession deal for the SCTEx privatization in June. The concession has an initial term of 25 years, renewable for another period but not beyond 2043.

In the first six years of the concession, for-mandated MPTC was required to pay the BCDA a minimum fixed or concession fee equal to the government agency's obligations. Under the terms of its bond from Japan International Cooperation Agency, the BCDA has to pay the Japanese lender P12 billion to P1.5 billion yearly.

From 2017 to the end of the concession, MPTC has also committed to advance-pay the amount of BCDA's debt servicing requirement in relation to the concession fees in the succeeding six-year-period of P1 billion, both of which are non-refundable and payable by the BCDA to the extent that its future 25-percent share is sufficient to cover the amount due in the succeeding six years.

But the P700-mil-lion annual cash flow of SCTEx is reportedly not commensurate with the risk of investment committed, Fernandez, however, is said the group was assuming that traffic volume in SCTEx would grow in the next five years. The target is to operate a daily flow of 30,000 vehicles per day in the next two years from its daily volume of 20,000 at present.

Aiyer was chasing the critical mass of 30,000, we hope the toll road will break even after the third year," Fernandez said.

"It's really a long term investment," he added.

The grid entrance first business and tourism in the area will improve, Fernandez said.

After the takeover, the group will implement a three-stage NLEX-SCTEx integration plan.

The first phase, which will happen soon as the group takes over, is the creation of a new toll-collection system. Motorists who have valid cards to pay at valuevers in SCTEx their exit point will be.

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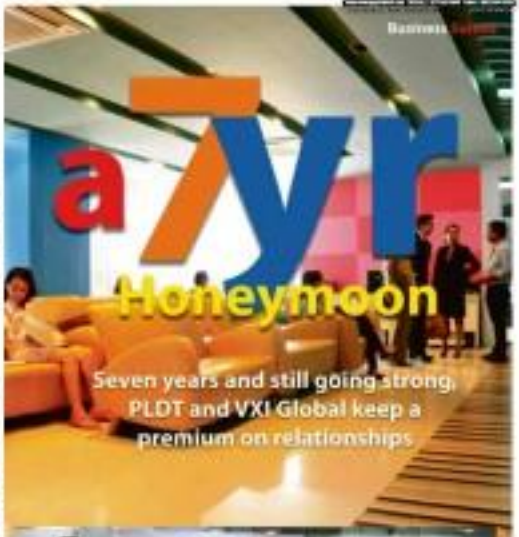

At the PLDT and VXI Global Solutions Inc. contract signing, VXI President Dalisi Zhou remarked, "PLDT is one of the standout service providers." And it looks like PLDT and VXI will go long and steady as business partners.

Arnold Ramos, IT Associate Director for VXI Global affirms this. "We have been partners with PLDT for seven years now, and we plan to be hand in hand in our growth. It [it] can provide us with the options and range of solutions which other providers may not have. It is also one-stop excellent relationship, they have only PLDT Relationship Manager called Dominic, making it easy to access point sales services like downtime reporting, escalations, and the like."

Arnold explains that PLDT service and support has always been there for VXI. "We are happy and satisfied with the PLDT Business solutions. We subscribe to various private networking and internet solutions of PLDT and DataTX."

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BUSINESS

GLOBE Telecom president and CEO Ernest L. Cu (middle) shares a light moment with Globe CFO Alberto de Larrazabal (left) and Globe corporate and legal services head Fraides M. Castelo (right) after reporting a P5.1-billion net income for the first half of the year and an increase in subscriber base by 700,000 in the second quarter to close the period with 24.62 million subscribers.

Bucket, unlimited promos hurt telcos

By Paolo G. Montecillo

EARLIER THIS month, with less than optimistic looks on their faces, the top officials of the country's major telecommunications firms faced the media to report their financial performance for the first half of the year.

Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. and Globe Telecom, which together account for 80 percent of the mobile phone market, aired the same concerns. The industry's cash-bottom-pulling trend is to blame.

The combination of a maturing market and increasing competition have taken their toll on telco profits.

PLDT posted a P10.54-billion profit at the end of the second quarter, or just 1 percent higher than year-ago level. This is the slowest quarterly profit climb for the company in the last five quarters.

The effect was more pronounced for Globe. Its net income fell 29 percent to P5.2 billion in the first half, putting in doubt the company's expectations earlier this year that last year's earnings could be used to be surpassed in 2010.

The performances of the duopoly of PLDT and Globe in the stock market reflects this outlook for the industry.

Despite the main Philippine Stock Exchange index reaching a 21-month high last week, Globe shares price remains at P950 as of last Friday. This is 2m from its value 12 months ago, which was well over the P1,000 mark.

Investors have been equally cool to PLDT shares, which closed at P2,440 last week, from its 52-week high of about P2,750, notched in January.

"The economics of the industry has changed. The volumes of text and calls are increasing. But the margins are shrinking because of many bucket, prepaid promos," PLDT public affairs head Ramon Isberto said.

(CONTINUED ON B7)

Gov't plans to sell PNOC shipping unit

Stake in Malampaya to be maintained

By Amy R. Remo

PETRON plans to sell its 10-percent stake in the Malampaya project already shelved, the government is now considering putting up for auction the shipping subsidiary of Philippine National Oil Co. (PNOC).

"The (PNOC) board already decided to explore the possibility of letting go of its shipping company. You have to sell the ones that which are single hulled. So rather than just sell the ships, the board is inclined to sell the whole company," said Energy Secretary Jesse Robredo.

PNOC Shipping and Transport Corp. (PNOC-STC) is engaged in maritime commerce, particularly in the shipping, tendering, lightering, barging, towing, transport and shipment of goods, chemicals and petroleum.

At present, the shipping subsidiary maintains four tankers, of which three are owned and one is chartered-in, with capacities ranging from 23,000 to 30,000 barrels each.

PNOC-STC is one of the five subsidiaries of PNOC. The four others are PNOC Exploration Corp., which owns the 10 percent Malampaya stake; PNOC Alternative Fuels Corp.; PNOC Renewables Corp.; and PNOC Development and Management Corp.

The energy chief, however, did not cite specific targets as to how much the government was expecting to raise from the sale of the shipping firm. He also did not provide a timetable for the planned asset disposal.

"We don't know as of now, as we are asking for valuation of the assets. They also have liabilities that need to be paid," Alexander was told to court investors.

In a briefing last Friday, Alexander reiterated the government's decision to keep to make in Malampaya.

"There are other PNOC subsidiaries that are going to be offered for sale but not this one, not yet. We are not recommending (the sale of the Malampaya) stake because the value is very good," he stated.

"The pressure is natural and private (the Malampaya stake) now is not as great as before and it's not the one that you want to let go considering the amount of resources it is bringing in now," Alexander said.

Finance Undersecretary Adia Sevilla earlier told the Inquirer that the sale of the Malampaya stake was no longer a priority mainly because it was making money for the government.

MRT removes 'noncompliant' ad billboards

By Paolo G. Montecillo

THE OPERATOR of the Metro Rail Transit (MRT) line along Edsa is dismantling and removing several billboards, putting the former advertising contractor Trackworks Rail Transit Trading and Promotions Inc. (Trackworks), which do not comply with the country's building code.

In a statement, MRT Development Corp. (MRT Devco) said by local businessman Reiner Schweyen, likewise said it had already canceled its contract with Trackworks. The company said it would handle the transition's advertising business itself.

The move is in compliance with a recent drive by the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) against illegal advertising assets along highways.

The department found that several billboards installed along the MRT line on Edsa were in violation with the local building code. The violations, among others, were that the advertisements were either too big or blocked the flow of air through MRT ventilation ducts.

"We are now dismantling advertising assets that are not in compliance with the MRT's standards," MRT Devco said.

"We will cooperate with DPWH in addressing the alleged violation of Trackworks, and also would like to assure the advertising public that MRT Devco will continue to provide advertising services to the public," MRT Devco administrator vice president Rob Lizares said.

MRT Devco said the DPWH originally warned Trackworks to do the corrections last year, but government officials were surprised to find out that the company's contract with the MRT operator had already been canceled.

The MRT's advertising business is now handled by Media Puente Inc., which acts as an advertising agent.

Laiga said the contract with Trackworks was not renewed in August last year after the company failed to pay a total of P267 million to the MRT operator, representing its share in advertising revenues.

This led to the cancellation of the contract, which Trackworks appealed twice with the Regional Trial Courts of Pasig and Makati. The advertising company lost both appeals.

BDO widens lead over rivals

TYCOON TERRY ED Ramon de Ore Ecuhuit has retained its bragging right as the country's largest banking conglomerate, widening its lead over nearest rival Metropolitan Bank & Trust Co. as of end-June.

Based on the latest statement of financial condition filed by the two banks at Thursday, BDO ended the first semester with consolidated assets of P874.99 billion.

Loans and receivables stood at P495 billion while deposit liabilities amounted to P691 billion.

Metropolitan Bank & Trust Co., on the other hand, reported P814.66 billion in consolidated assets. Its loans and receivables amounted to P466.38 billion while the deposit base stood at P588 billion.

BDO has dislodged Metrobank as the country's largest bank in resources since the third quarter of 2008. Earlier this year, both BDO and Metrobank bolstered their capital ahead of more stringent capital adequacy requirements expected to be drawn up under the Basel 3 global framework.

BDO has grown substantially as the core of the country to become the country's largest bank through a series of merger and acquisition deals. The bank has gobbled up nine new bank almost every year: Asian Hong Philippines in 2001, First e-Bank in 2002, Banco Santander Philippines in 2003, United Overseas Bank-Philippines in 2005, Equitable PCI Bank in 2006, American Express Savings Bank in 2007 and Citibank Savings in 2009. It is now currently working on the acquisitions of Export and Industry bank.

The Banker placed BDO 1096th among its Top 1000 World Banks ranking, a survey conducted annually by the British banking and finance magazine. BDO climbed 45 notches from its previous world ranking of 1141th.

The rankings are based on the definition of core tier 1 capital as prescribed by Basel's Bank for International Settlements (BIS). Doris C. Dumlao

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Building a nation of savers

The Real Bank targets children for thrift drive

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

IT'S AN observation repeated ad nauseam: The Philippines is not a nation of savers. What comes in does not stay. And never often than not, the outflow even exceeds inflow, leaving many Filipinos in debt. It is no surprise, then, that many Filipinos are not financially sure how to retire day, claiming that they do not earn enough in the first place.

But the 24-year-old The Real Bank, a growing thrift bank that started in Cainta, Rizal, begs to disagree. It believes that Filipinos, no matter how little they earn, can—and must—save for their own good.

The Real Bank realizes, however, that it will take an almost herculean effort to convince adult Filipinos to change their financial ways and set aside more money for savings, which is why it has trained its sights on school children.

Started in 2004, the "Bata ... Bata... Mag-Impok at Magsinop" advocacy campaign aims to educate children on the value of saving, which means denying themselves some material things that offer short-term pleasure in exchange for something that will be of greater importance to their future.

The Real Bank people make the rounds of 128 elementary and 20 high schools near to branches and talks to them about basic financial concepts such as savings, interest rates and long-term value of money earned today.

Implemented in partnership with the Department of Education and advocacy group Mary Liubert International, the "Bata ... Bata... Mag-Impok at Magsinop" also teaches children how they can use their savings as capital for their own business ventures, goal-ing them out the need to improved financial health.

Anna Lisa S. Ochoa, senior vice president for corporate planning and outside services of Real Bank, tells the business in an interview that the program also makes full use of the childhood cravings or preferences of the bank chair Jose G. Araullo, who founded auditing firm Panong Isayan & Araullo.

Araullo, who emerged from retirement in 2003 to take on the challenge of growing The Real Bank, talks to students about how he bought only what he needed, and not necessarily what he wanted, so he could fatten his savings account.

These stories were eventually compiled in a story book, "Mga Kwento ni Lolo Pepe", that school children as well as their parents can look up to reinforce their personal interest to save more.

The Real Bank also provided the children with their own piggy banks to help them develop the habit of saving aside a little every day for their savings.

Ochoa says The Real Bank complements the advocacy program with bank products so that the children and their parents will have a place to park their funds.

Under The Real Bank's Kiddie Savers program, bank deposits of as low as P100 are guaranteed an interest rate of 5 percent a year, which far exceeds the current bank average of about 1 percent.

Ochoa says the savings program was developed in response to the clamor of the children for their own savings account since their piggy banks "were getting fat."

She admits that The Real Bank will not really earn much from the Kiddie Savers accounts but the bank believes that these will contribute to the bank's mission to help the Philippines finally become a nation of savers.

Besides, the advocacy campaign has borne other kinds of fruit.

Ochoa says that six years since the project was rolled out, the bank's resources have more than tripled and she attributes this in part to the goodwill generated by the advocacy campaign.

"The program became an advertising arm because the students and then the parents and the parents talked about it among themselves. That encouraged them to put their savings in our bank," she says.

In 2000, The Real Bank was 26th in terms of resources among the 36 thrift banks at that time. Today, The Real Bank has climbed up to 16th place among the 48 thrift banks offering mainly savings and loans services.

Given the considerable impact of the advocacy program on both the children and the bank itself, Ochoa says there are plans to expand the reach of the campaign and even include adults in the loop.

As she says, even adults need to be taught how to save and make better use of their money.

THE REAL bank chair Jose G. Araullo (left) and president Alfredo S. Barrozo

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Auto industry posts 37% rise in vehicle sales

Growth attributed to stronger consumer confidence

By Abigail L. Ho

MUNCLE: $45.8B (In the first seven months surged 37.3 percent to 98,119 units, from 71,506 units in the same period last year, driven mainly by stronger consumer confidence arising from the change in administration.

According to data from the Chamber of Automotive Manufacturers of the Philippines Inc. and the Truck Manufacturers Association, commercial vehicle sales continued to fuel industry growth, registering 64,690 units in sales as of mid-July, a 38.6 percent improvement from the previous year's 46,674 units.

Passenger car sales likewise went up to 34,329 units, higher by 34.7 percent than the 25,262 units sold in January to July 2009.

In July alone, overall vehicle sales rose 37.7 percent to 15,972 units, from 11,597 units in the same month last year.

"Continued growth in July sales signals sustained improvement in growth for the second half of the year. Auto sales growth is positively correlated to the growth of the economy. The continued robust vehicle sales reflects stronger consumer and business confidence which, in turn, results in enterprise growth that benefits vehicle sales," Cariap president Elizabeth Lee said in a statement issued Saturday.

President Benigno Aquino III's commitment to crack down on smugglers and all forms of corruption, she said, would also bode well for the industry.

The auto industry is one of the biggest victims of smuggling in the country.

"The President sends a clear signal moving forward. This is important. Our commitment to essential and key, particularly to investors," Lee said, adding that the auto industry expected to become a larger part of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations regional auto industry hub under De Aquino administration.

The new government, she said, could spur local players to boost the utilization of their under-utilized assembly plants, not only to serve the demands of the local market but also to possibly increase the Philippines' presence in the export market.

Toyota Motor Philippines Corp. continued to hold the top spot in the industry with a market share of 32.3 percent and sales of 31,703 units in the first seven months.

Occupying the No. 2 position is Mitsubishi Motors Philippines Corp., which sold 10,004 units in the January-July period to corner an 10.9-percent share of the market.

Rounding up the top three is Hyundai Asia Resources Inc. with a market share of 12.1 percent and seven-month sales of 11,838 units.

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Bucket, unlimited promos ...

From page B5

Shrinking margins

The bucket-priced and unlimited promos, which allow subscribers to make or send an indefinite number of calls or text messages, have dragged Company earnings down sharply.

The effect is that telcos increased, while revenues stayed flat or have gone down.

"The challenge for the telcos, with margins of nearly being pressured, is they have to continue investing in their networks," Morelo said.

He said companies were being forced to spend more to improve their infrastructure to ensure that their networks were able to cope with the increasing number of texts sent and call made every day.

The phenomenon of cut-throat pricing is by no means unique to the Philippines. But what sets the country apart from the others, which is what also makes it harder for telcos to cope with the industry's changing dynamics, is the very local ownership configuration.

"The Philippines is unique in that text messaging has always been very strong here. In other countries, it was voice services that were strong in the past," Morelo said.

This means that while networks abroad were built to take the heavy load of voice calls, local telcos had built their networks for the relatively lighter load of text messages.

With voice calls now exponentially deeper than they were before, the country's networks are facing a harder time in handling the heavier load.

"There are also user-driven quality issues to cut down this time," Globe Telecom president and CEO Ernest Cu said in a recent interview.

He said the current pricing schemes offered by telecom firms opened up the possibilities to abuse.

Cut-throat competition

"If it exists, the lowest prices are beneficial to the subscribers, but it seems people really need to send 1,000 text messages a day?" Cu said.

He said the unlimited prices resulted in more people sending countless spam messages.

The National Telecommunications Commission has issued rules against sending spam text messages, although officials have admitted that there was no way to catch violators since most of them are prepaid SIM cards.

These disaster zones are causing network congestion, leading to glitches like messages arriving hours late or voice calls being dropped unexpectedly.

The effect on Globe's earnings has been dear. "It's never going to be as lucrative as it was when text messages were P1 each and calls were 30.50 a minute," Cu said in a recent briefing. But the lower profits for companies could lead to a slowdown in industry innovations.

"Companies will no longer be as interested to invest in the industry because the money will not be there anymore," Cu said.

To offset the decline in margins caused by cheap promos, both firms have been investing heavily in developing broadband Internet services, which is tagged as the industry's next major growth area.

Globe has remarked more than half of its 3000 cell sites capable of supporting the 3G (next generation) technology, while Smart's 3G network is expected to be completed by the end of the year.

With just around 25 percent of the population using the web, industry players are broadband as the best bet for telcos that want to drive their profits back up.

Both firms are also being more creative by finding more applications for telecommunications technology.

Digital pricing

Samsung Digital Mobile Philippines Inc., a provider of the mobile brand Sun Cellular which pioneered unlimited promos, said its pricing was not to blame.

"It's more of the effect of the increasing market because if my pricing was to blame then their profits should have dipped the same year we introduced our promos," Sun Cellular said.

When Sun Cellular first introduced unlimited price offerings, both PLDT and Globe cried foul saying that the new services were victims of predatory pricing that would eventually harm the industry.

The government sided with Sun Cellular in the dispute. Digital has yet to reveal its second quarter earnings performance.

Still good bets

Despite the industry's uneven growth prospects, a local broker said telecommunications companies are still good bets.

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BUSINESS

First Gen makes good on P5B bond payment

Lopez company uses part of proceeds of P15-B rights offer

By Amy R. Nunez

LOPEZ LED First Gen Corp. has settled its P5-billion corporate bonds upon their July 30 maturity, according to the Philippine Rating Services Corp. (PhilRatings).

In a statement, PhilRatings said it had received a written confirmation from First Gen that the company paid the bonds using part of the proceeds from its P15-billion stock rights offering last January 2018.

First Gen issued in 2005 the 11.33-percent fixed coupon, five-year peso bonds that matured this year. The bond was not listed on any bourse.

Proceeds from the bond issue were used to finance First Gen's growth strategy. To acquire power generating companies being privatized by the government and generation companies that may be sold to private firms.

Part of the funds also partially financed new power projects.

On maturity date, First Gen's bonds were rated PRS Aa.

The rating is the second highest that can be given by PhilRatings.

It indicates a firm's capacity to meet its financial commitments.

PhilRatings earlier noted that the short-term liquidity issues of First Gen had been addressed after its P15-billion stock rights offering concluded in January 2018 and that there was an outlook of improving profitability.

Over the past year, First Gen has also been able to rationalize the significant amount of short-term borrowings it took on in relation to the acquisition of Energy Development Corp. (EDC).

This was done through the issuance of long-term debt, refinancing of short-term debt into longer term debt and dividends from subsidiaries, among others.

PhilRatings also said that the company's profit should improve because of the current tight power supply situation in the country which would boost demand and pricing for the company's unscontracted capacities.

First Gen president and CEO Federico R. Lopez earlier said that the company and its subsidiaries were expected to spend some $1.5 billion over the next five years for power projects that would generate at least 1,000 megawatts (MW) in additional capacity.

Lopez said these projects included the expansion of the 500-MW San Gabriel natural gas plant in Batangas and the Pantabangan-Masiway hydropower plant complex in Nueva Ecija.

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Philex keeps rosy view

By Riza T. Olchondra

THE COUNTRY'S largest mining company Philex Mining Corp., has declared an interim cash dividend after reporting growth in its core net income in the first half of the year and a brighter outlook for the rest half.

The total payout is P345.8 million for common a share, Philex said in a statement.

The Philex board of directors approved the cash bonus for all stockholders as of the record date of Aug. 16, 2018, payable on Sept. 11, 2018.

The dividend is worth about a quarter of its reservoir earnings.

Philex reported that its consolidated core net income in the first six months rose 3.9 percent to P683.9 million, from the P658.3 million recorded in the same period last year, as income from oil production and higher metal prices offset lower ore grades at its Padcal mine.

According to Philex chair Manuel V. Pangilinan, the interim dividend also reflects the board's confidence in the prospects of the company for the rest of the year.

"We are confident that the second half of the year will be boosted by higher metal prices and better quality ore which we are already mining now as well as by the continuing greater contribution from our energy operations," said Pangilinan.

Philex is counting on strong prospects at its Silangan project, which is going full speed ahead and "we aim to start the development phase of this mine by next year. Silangan will play a key role in building a bright future for Philex."

Even the government has expressed optimism, with the Mines and Geosciences Bureau saying that the Silangan project would be a good boost at the country's mineral output.

Get investors, banks urged

By Michelle V. Rarea

PHILIPPINE DEPOSIT Insurance Corp. (PDIC) has called on undercapitalized rural banks to look for potential investors, urging them to tap a new government service that facilitates acquisitions of troubled banks.

PDIC President Jose Negrales said rural banks with capital adequacy ratios below the 10 percent prescribed by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) should consider submitting to a "merchanding" facility that will make it easier for them to get investors.

Under the facility, banks that are either looking for fresh capital or scouring for investment opportunities are matched by the PDIC based on their profiles.

The matchmaking facility was established earlier this year and is part of the overall Strengthening Programs for Rural Banks (SPRB).

Negrales said that so far, 28 banks have registered with the matchmaking facility. The problem, however, is that the registered banks are all potential investors wanting to acquire a smaller, troubled rural bank.

No capital-deficient bank has so far enlisted, he said.

One reason is that rural banks are concerned that enlisting would create panic among their depositors as this could signal financial trouble.

Negrales stressed, however, that the list of banks entered into the matchmaking facility will be kept confidential.

As of October last year, 303 rural banks failed to meet the 10-percent capital adequacy ratio required by the BSP and were therefore placed under righer monitoring.

BUSINESSMonday Business Features Editor Margie Quiogue-Rubio

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Slow but sure wins the race for BPI chief

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

WHEN YOU'RE the president and chief executive officer of a giant, 110-year-old institution like the Bank of the Philippine Islands, the Philippines' second largest banking institution, you have to be something of a tightrope walker.

Like the Big Top artist who makes a living out of walking that treacherous wire high off the ground with nothing but a long pole for balance, the CEO also has to master the delicate balancing act, and with steely determination, forge ahead despite the very real possibility of falling off.

The consequences of slipping, even by just the perceived inch, are dire.

BPI CEO Aurelio R. Montinola III, however, has proven himself to be a world-class act, as he has been able to steer the banking unit of the Ayala group through the storm of the global economic downturn since the Great Depression of the 1930s to emerge stronger and ready to expand to new areas with great potential for profit.

Montinola tells the Inquirer that managing a bank in bad times requires an extra measure of prudence, but not too much to the point that the bank will be rendered unable or unwilling to take advantage of opportunities that inevitably crop up during a crisis, paralyzed by fear and concerns over what lies ahead.

Thus, it took advantage of the lull in the economic landscape to get back to basics, investing in the innovation of branches and the elevation of customer service standards, in preparation for the inevitable upswing in the local and global economies.

Since 2006, for example, when the global crisis was at its height, BPI has been rolling out alternative distribution channels such as kiosks and express centers in malls to service customers during weekends. It has also made a conscious and aggressive effort to tap new clients such as small and medium-scale enterprises that are about to go big and solidified its foothold in the growing remittance market.

BPI has also expanded its credit card business, beefed up its insurance portfolio and has even tied up with sister company Globe Telecom to penetrate the billion-peso microfinance market.

What Montinola has achieved so far with the help of the BPI organization was no small feat, thus earning for him The Asian Banker Leadership Achievement Award, and for BPI, the recognition as the strongest bank in the Philippines.

Montinola, who was elevated to CEO in 2008 following the retirement of Xavier Loinaz, says that the Philippines was lucky because it had to go through the pain of the Asian currency crisis of 1998, as the local banks—including BPI—had already unloaded bad debt, overcommitted on core operations and became more prudent in spending and lending.

"We have learned from our past. So we have lower leverage compared to the banks in other countries. Our fundamentals are better. In as the contagion is contained, we are for the moment insulated from it," Montinola says in an interview at the BPI head office in Makati City.

And given the heightened sense of optimism one month into the Aquino administration, Montinola says the mood in banking circles is "genuinely positive." BPI, he says, will almost certainly beat last year's income performance.

BPI last year booked a profit of P6.5 billion, 33 percent more than the previous year's income on higher interest margins and trading gains, and it is targeting a profit of P9.6 billion this year on expectations that economic growth will accelerate to at least 5.5 percent this year.

Growth, however, brings about its own challenges, according to Montinola.

He explains that in more prosperous times, it is easy to be carried away by the wave of optimism. The temptation is also great to invest in areas that are just opening up because of the tantalizing prospect of making a quick buck.

BPI, however, has decided to stay true to its conservative nature.

"The bank has always been conservative even during the good times. We are not as aggressive as some of our competitors but we have always believed in prudent diversification," Montinola says. "It has served us well, in good times and in bad."

Rebecca Agdamag Pobre

Of Tuguegarao City, Cagayan

Peacefully joined her Creator on August 7, 2010 at the age of 84.

Her bereaved husband **Dr. Briccio Y. Pobre**; children: **Baldomero** and **Cynthia** (†), **Dr. Antonio, Drs. Josephine** and **Andrew So, Teresita** and **Mario Evidente, Judy, Oscar** and **Shirley, Lourdes** and **Alex Tan, Brigitte** and **Arnaldo Mahor, Juanita** (†); grandchildren; great grandchildren; brothers (†) and sisters (†); brothers (†) and sisters-in-law; nephews and nieces; relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at La Funeraria Paz, Superior chapel, South wing, G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City

Interment will be announced later.

JOSE FERRER MONTANO, JR.

Passed away in the grace of our Lord at the age of 67.

His remains lie in state at St. Peter Memorial Chapel, Quezon Ave., Quezon City.

Interment will be on Thursday, August 12, 2010 at Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City after the 9:00 a.m. Mass at St. Peter Memorial Chapel.

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RODOLFO V. CRUZ (above), who stands charged for the crime of Syndicated Estafa in Criminal Case Nos. 142395-PSG to 142401-PSG, together with Primalee Cruz-Cordero, Abelardo R. Cordero, Cecilia F. Cruz and Meloqen Buesa, are the subjects of a Warrant of Arrest dated 27 April 2010 issued by the Regional Trial Court of Pasig, Branch 265.

Please contact **722-0625** or **722-1206** if you have information leading to the arrest of the Accused.

NOTICE OF SEARCH AND CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

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After the 'wang-wang'

MAPping THE FUTURE
Evelyn R. Singson

IF THERE is one order that President Aquino can issue that will be as popular as his 'no wang-wang' policy, it is to prohibit the use of his name, nickname, acronym and photo in government projects.

Before his new appointees start hanging their projects as "P-Noy this!" or "Galalong ani si Kapatid" or MRCS 28 Forever, the President should announce that he is ordering them to stop cranking their brains trying to wordsmith names whose first initials will spell P-Noy or derivatives of it.

It is time the people in government stop hankering to be the lawmaking and just do their jobs without any attribution or fanfare. After all, delivering services is the people is what they are supposed to do and the people do not have to be beholden to any public official for just doing his duty as a public servant.

In the private sector, it is anathema to name any project after the company's leader except perhaps in some instances to recognize a deceased founder or leader in its corporate social responsibility or sports programs. This is because it is not considered professional to build a personality cult around its leaders.

It is time for P-Noy to decree a change to the old and annoying practice of making government people think it will flatter and please him if they announced his name to some construction work or to paint his photo in government-issued ID's or clutters dole-out programs after him.

Should P-Noy lead the move to de-personalize government work, we expect all others—governors, congressmen, mayors or department secretaries to be utterly embarrassed not to follow his example. They have silenced their "wang-wang" now must the P-Noy silence be.

It is time to change people's consciousness from patronage politics to public accountability.

It is time that people demanded performance from government officials, instead of being grateful to the officials who only do their jobs, to the private sector, doing what is expected of you is the norm.

Doing more than what is expected with good results merit some recognition.

If billboards have to be erected to announce projects, it should contain information that will educate and engage the public about the project. It should even contain metrics that will enable a learned observer to evaluate the project's cost and to check if the specifications are in order. If the billboard has to be, it should make sure that this is a project of your government, not of any individual politician, and the taxpayers are paying the bill, not the official whose face is plastered on the site.

There is no need to advertise one's achievements. Recognition or honor given to one's self has no value. People will recognize service done to them without thumping one's chest in announce. "I, My Government Official, is responsible for building this foot bridge."

People will remember that the footbridge made it safe and convenient for them to cross the street.

It is difficult to imagine that a top official ordered such a minor infrastructure but his underlings insist that his photo should hang on the footbridge, hoping to please the boss while destroying its aesthetics.

Soon enough, the voters will lament. If Sis. Public Servant has done his job well even without his name or name posted on the facility. If the voters are satisfied, come election time, they will register their approval and appreciation through their ballots. In time, the voter will also realize that it is to his best interest to get the government to deliver roads, jobs and services than accept a one-time bribe of P500 for his vote.

Even the politicos will realize that it is easier and cheaper to perform his job well than to buy votes during election.

Senator Tatad has filed a bill prohibiting naming government projects after government officials. Congressmen, who are the most frequent users of billboards and ads announcing their projects to aid of election, may just discard the billion-Oblation.

P-Noy by declining requests to use his name in vain, sends a strong message that it is so bad taste to claim personal credit for what rightfully belongs to government.

(The author was MAP President in 2008 and is Chair of the MAP National Issues Committee for 2010. Feedback at mapping-future.com.ph for previous articles, please visit map.org.ph.)

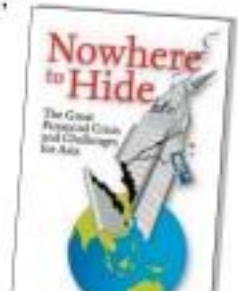
'Why did no one see the crisis coming?'

By Edsel L. Dela Ji
Contributor

SOMEONE TO hide presents a neoclassical analysis on the origins of the 2008 Global Crisis. It sets out to answer for people who might ask: "Why did no one see this crisis coming?" Beyond the neoclassical analysis, the authors inadvertently highlighted aspects that have been planted over to the ongoing discussion about the Global Crisis, namely: Explanations on why the crisis occurred is a crisis in itself.

First of all, neoclassical economics may be the theory of apologetics of liberalization and deregulation but the theory itself was not the cause of the crisis. Neoclassical economics, as with any economic theory, is a way of understanding how the economy works. In clamping the state as "power over parts of neoclassical theory" (Chapter 1), the authors make a misleading conclusion.

Students know that neoclassical economics has two branches. Neoclassical macroeconomics theory and neoclassical microeconomics theory. Each branch looks at a distinct aspect of the economy. Take for instance the idea that the best possible outcome is reached when there is free competition in the economy of complete markets, symmetric information, and zero transactions costs. The context is an ideal scenario. Nonetheless, the limitations of the upward curve, so to speak, can be stressed when the imperfections are addressed in the analysis, as the works of Joseph Stiglitz have shown.



Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore, 2010

BOOK REVIEW

Teaching it to therefore problematic because the framework does not fit the realities in developing economies. The theory needs to be modified. However, doing so requires contradiction with neoclassical economics methods. Yet that dialogue is sadly difficult to achieve—yes, even in the Philippines—because the other perspectives are dismissed as meaningless or as heterodoxical.

It would seem that economists know what Adam Smith, the father of economics, had to say about the workings of the economy. Smith said that together with the presence of self-interests, there is the imperative to help others and to not harm others. These ideas are laid out in his books: Theory of Moral Sentiments (1759) and an inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations (1776).

Juxtaposed, Smith is saying that a moral-light/market economy is a partnership between the "invisible hand" and the "helping hand."

We governments, in mainstream media, are being told not to hold a hand because doing so will distort the market and result in sub-optimal outcomes. But surprisingly, market policies that are designed for neoclassical self-interest end up compromising the moral sentiments, in turn, producing a society that is anti-caring and managing to everyone and to the environment.

There is no acknowledgement that nonmarket forces can help engender social solidarity and even function as the counter-weights to unrestrained market operations. Of course, overgovernmental arrangements are to be encouraged but they should be pursued not only to be for making profits but also for building communities. Economic activities should not be seen as merely about getting and having things, but they should also be about being and becoming a type of person in one's own eyes, in the eyes of family and society and in the eyes of one's God. Needless to say the moral sentiments used

NEXT BY 2

Why the gap?

The first answer concerns political economy. Neoclassical economics in itself actually does not endorse intervention by some authority like government whosoever the prevailing situation is not bringing about the best possible outcome. Indeed, a subfield of neoclassical economics is welfare economics, which looks at optimal interventions. The problem is when the theory is mixed with a form of libertarian philosophy that stresses individual freedom and entrepreneurship at all levels, thereby producing a blend of thinking that rejects government intervention as one of the possible solutions to economic problems. If government is rejected, free market is therefore the only solution.

Teaching of economics

The second aspect is the teaching of economics. Most teachers forget that neoclassical economics is an ideal-type illustration of economic processes in the advanced economies.

HITEC

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BUSINESS Monday

Pangasinan blacksmith wields junkyard blades in global market

By Johanna Pharden
Inquirer Northern Luzon

PAZOERLEBO, PANGASINAN—To Hernando de Guzman, 32, the mark of a true Filipino entrepreneur is resourcefulness.

Faced with the closure of factories manufacturing the materials for his metal craft trade, De Guzman has turned to buying scraps from junkyards to sustain the business.

"The quality of our products is the same, if not better, than our competitors in the international market," he says.

In fact, he says recycled leaf springs of cars, which contain carbon steel ideal for forging, are at times better than those fresh off the market because old materials are rare, while new ones may contain other elements.

His swords and knives are of such superior quality that his shop, aptly named Blade Culture International (BCI), has distributors in other countries—three in the United States and one each in Germany, France and Singapore.

BCI is a 20-year old family legacy that De Guzman inherited from his grandfather and father, both of whom were blacksmiths.

Under the order De Guzman's BCI supplied blades and swords to many Hollywood blockbusters, including the "Lord of the Rings," "Braveheart" and "Batman Begins." BCI also created a custom-made Scottish claymore for the collection of actor Mel Gibson.

When his turn came, De Guzman used his entrepreneurial management degree to take the business to the next level.

"I want the world to know that the Filipino blade maker could also be globally competitive and innovative, and not just a mere copycat of others' designs," he says.

"BCI's products are unique, multifunctional and simple, but of superb quality," he adds.

With this in mind, he put up a Filipiniana line of blades last year. It has since become the shop's best selling line, having sold at least 3,000 pieces.

"The bolos and lots of different culinary groups in the Philippines inspired me in designing the Filipiniana line blades," says De Guzman.

The line sells between P2,300 and P3,000. The designs range from fillet knives to machetes.

BCI has distributors in the United States, Germany, France and Singapore.

"We put our this line because the preservation of our culture is important to us," De Guzman says.

Some of BCI's best customers for the Filipiniana line are members of the Philippines' Special Forces in the Middle East who use the machetes to combat.

BCI also have Japanese fan-connoisseurs of katana, commonly known as samurai swords.

De Guzman says this line is BCI's "first love" because it was for the company its first international award.

The Japanese line is priced between P5,800 and P15,000, with a big chunk of buyers being martial arts trainers.

Not to last group of products, BCI has a line of tactical knives priced between P1,750 and P4,000.

This line has a loyal following among the Iranian military's Special Forces, whose officers would even visit BCI's shop in Barangay Dilanyalan here to place their orders.

BCI accepts customized designs in three lines, as well as customizes European design or movie replica swords. It also offers services in creating cases for the blades and in making forming materials to accompany the products.

"We can only accommodate custom designs during the off-peak months of April to July," he says.

During its peak season, BCI churns out 500 blades—the maximum volume, given the shop's limited machinery. "We cannot afford to buy the necessary equipment for mass production just yet," De Guzman says.

With the number of customers and orders steadily increasing, he says he cared for the new machines and equipment heightens.

For now, BCI prides itself for its signature hand-made blades, which have gained respect in the international community.

"The ultimate goal is mass production but will keeping the quality intact," De Guzman says.

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PRRP SUPPORTS PDRF REHAB PLANS FOR METRO MANILA

Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP) represented by Chief Executive Arthur Kess Gneo (right) signs the Philippine Disaster Rehabilitation Foundation (PDRF) Memorandum of Agreement among 28 organizations supporting the creation of a master plan and the implementation of rehabilitation and risk-reduction measures in the disaster-hit areas of Metro Manila and the surrounding portions of Laguna and Rizal.

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'Why did ...

From page B11

to be brought back into the way we do economics.

Chapter 4 is the best part of the book. Several charges and many macroeconomic imbalances about the drivers of the 2008 Global Crisis. The authors are right in saying that there are historical economic antecedents in the United States but miss the point that the global structural antecedents make crises recurring. Their analysis would have been excellent if they discussed what needed to be done. Because describing the situation as 'contested terrain' (Chapter 6) is just not enough. Why there is a need to change the international economic order? What changes are needed in the international economic order in the post-crisis period?

In hindsight, we have come to understand the conditions that led to the Global Crisis, the unraveling of events to 2008 and the aftermath, as well as a sense of the events that have yet to play out. It is time that debates move to the next phase, namely determining the steps to be taken in transforming a nonsystem global economy into a proper system for coordinating cross-border resource flows and global economic adjustments. Letting the crisis be, as we speak, and allowing the global economy to reconstitute itself is passé.

(The author teaches 'International Political Economy' and 'Comparative Economic Theories: Mechanical Economics vs. Marxian Economics' at Ateneo de Manila University. He has a Ph.D. in Economics from the University of Massachusetts Amherst.)

BUSINESS

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June factory prices in 14-month downtrend

By Ronnel W. Domingo

FACTORY-GATE prices fell faster at 5.9 percent year-on-year in June, the lowest drop during 14 straight months of decline, according to the National Statistics Office.

NSO data show that the quickening of the decline in prices was partly due to continued double-digit drops in prices of furniture and fixtures (-15.9 percent), electrical machinery (-10.3 percent) and non-electrical machinery (-17.1 percent).

Results from the NSO's monthly survey of factory-gate prices—covering 20 selected groups of manufactured goods included in the producer price index (PPI)—showed that prices in

(UNDER B-2)

Seipi maps out RP's tech future

By Abigail L. Ho

THE SEMICONDUCTOR and Electronics Industries of the Philippines Inc. (Seipi) has identified manufacturing services and renewable energy as two of the areas that the country should focus on in terms of technological developments.

In its draft technology roadmap, which would be presented to the government once completed, Seipi vice chair Achiel Fuang said there were two of the sectors that had the most potential to drive future growth for the Philippines, as determined during a recent meeting of the group.

During that meeting, he related that an expert from global consortium International Electronics Manufacturing Initiative (Inemi) conducted a lecture on where technology would be going in the coming years and the directions where multinational firms were heading in terms of product and service development.

"We want to determine where the Philippines is now in the global technology roadmap. There are so many areas where we can be, but we obviously can't be all things to everyone. We need to focus on some technologies and strengthen them so we could gain investment in those areas," he told the business.

Two of the most promising technologies, he said, were manufacturing services, where the country was now a global player, and renewable energy, on which countries the world over were now focusing.

Right now, he said the country already had a 10 percent share of the global manufacturing services market via its electronics and semiconductor exports.

"Yes, we are already a player here, but we want to know where technology is now so we can further strengthen our capabilities and eventually make the Philippines a big ball player on the manufacturing side. We'll get a lot of focus on this," he said.

Renewable energy, on the other hand, had become a key part of the technology supply chain, he said, making it another area of potential technology focus for the Philippines.

This particular sector also had the potential for immense social and developmental impact on the country, she said.

"In this sector, we want to know how we can make the biggest impact in terms of electrification. We can be in solar, wind, wave...there are a lot of possibilities. But we also have to build a market here. It's important that we do that, too," he said.

Developing solar technologies, for example, would enable the country to become a key player in the renewable energy space globally, he said. At the same time, this could possibly make the use of solar power more mainstream by making the technology cheaper to acquire and maintain.

"We can throw a lot of resources into solar technologies. Develop more efficient solar panels, inverter and wafers so we can grow the industry and also eventually provide cheaper electricity for this one, should be a really exciting investment because we need years of research and development to achieve this," he said.

Seipi president Ernesto Ilarina said the roadmap should be completed by October.

Around 300 Seipi members met in Baguio City recently to formulate the roadmap of the industry and the organization means to make the country more competitive in this field.

Apart from solar power, the packaging industry along with at least 14 other sectors were studied for feasibility.

"We're measuring our future. The technology roadmap will be presented to the government and will determine which technologies and technology evolutions we should focus on. We're hoping to come out with the upskill roadmap by October," Ilarina said.

The reassessment is also in response to global trends where the electronics market is expected to reflect toward the end of the third quarter, which prompted Seipi to consider a downward adjustment of its growth target for the year.

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Overseas expansion to boost SMIC's growth

By Doris C. Dumlao

TYCOON SEEKS: SM's SM Investments Corp. aims to notch a net profit growth range of 12-16 percent each year for the next five years and may consider further overseas opportunities to help fuel such growth. [B1]

In a recent interview, SMIC president Hanley Ng said the group, which was now putting up at least one new shopping mall in mainland China each year, was also looking at other overseas investments in line with its existing businesses.

Aside from shopping mall development, SMIC has interests in retailing, banking, residential developments and hotel-tourism.

Asked whether SMIC was looking at listing some businesses in China aside from shopping mall development, he said: "We're doing something along that line to sustain our growth. We want to grow our net profit by 12-15 percent for the next five years."

However, he said nothing definite had been mapped out so far, when asked whether the group would likewise want to put up residential development tailor-suit to its shopping malls in China. Asked what other businesses the SM group would like to bring to China, he said it would stick to its core expertise.

Jeffrey Lim, chief finance officer of SMIC's shopping mall developer unit SM Prime Holdings Inc., said the company was now working to secure additional shopping mall sites in China.

"By 2013, we should have additional three to four sites in China on top of the current developments that we have," Lim said.

SMIH has three existing malls in China and is set to open its fourth in the city of Suzhou.

SMIC last week reported that its first-semester net profit grew by 15 percent year on year to P9.3 billion on robust contribution from various businesses. As SMIC also reports, the domestic economy is certain a strong momentum in the second half, the company has upgraded its full-year 2010 net profit growth forecast to 14 percent from 12 percent.

Next month, SMIC officials will embark on a non-deal overseas roadshow to update investors about the company's operations. He said SMIC had no need to borrow as internal cash flow would fund expansion needs, but would be open to opportunities for sharing financing.

"If somebody (an offer as opportunistic financing, who are we to refuse?" Steveld reporter.

The roadshow briefings will be held in Hong Kong, Singapore, London, Boston, New York and Toronto in early September, Ng said.

Treasury gains boost RCBC H1 earnings

FLOURISHED-LED REAL Commercial Banking Corp. grew its first semester net profit by 25 percent year-on-year to P2.11 billion on a double-digit growth of interest, fee-based and treasury earnings.

This six-month performance resulted in a return on equity of 14.84 percent and return on assets of 1.52 percent, the bank reported.

"Healthy growth in the bank's core retail banking, corporate banking, and small and medium enterprises businesses supported by gains from treasury operations spurred the bank's strong performance," RCBC said in a statement.

RCBC's net interest income increased by 11 percent from a year ago to P5.46 billion as the bank sustained good margins while a 13.6-percent expansion in low-cost funds improved its funding mix.

Other operating income likewise grew by 19.7 percent to P3.18 billion from a year ago as commissions expanded by 24 percent while trust fees and other service fees likewise grew by 14 percent and 20 percent, respectively. Trading gains were likewise up by 66 percent.

"RCBC continues to focus on a strategy of growth in the core business lines, of improving service offerings, and expanding distribution platforms, with deepening customer relationships," said RCBC president Lorenzo Tan.

On the other hand, operating expenses grew by 16 percent as the bank continued to expand its branch and automated teller machine network in order to increase reach and improve customer convenience. The bank also increased loan loss provisions by 19 percent to P1.07 billion.

As of end-June, its branch network reached 344, up from 334 last year. This included the conversion of 10 branches of BPI Family Bank branches into the RCBC network. The bank now has 510 ATMs.

Total consolidated resources reached P283 billion, 10 percent higher than a year ago. The growth in earning assets was supported by a 9-percent expansion in Security to P199.4 billion.

Total deposits totaled P208.9 billion, up by 11.3 percent from a year ago.

The parent bank's capital adequacy ratio (CAR) eased to 17.9% percent from 18.2 percent, still above the regulatory requirement of 10 percent. The core or tier 1 CAR ratio of 15.13 percent was also higher than the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' 6 percent requirement.

During the first half of the year, the bank successfully issued $200 million in five-year senior notes and completed the issuance of P5 billion in long-term negotiable certificates of deposit to strengthen its long-term liability position. Doris C. Dumlao

Profit taking seen this week

LOCAL STOCKS are seen becoming ripe for profit taking this week after the recent run-up which was driven by encouraging second-quarter corporate earnings and the upbeat global markets.

The main share Philippine Stock Exchange index, which is now trading at 11-month highs, gained 2.61 percent last week to close at 1,524.36 on Friday.

PSE Chief Investment Officer Jaime Antonio Ysmeg said several stocks surged last week in anticipation of positive earnings surprises—ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp., Filinvest Land Inc., Megaworld Corp., Filinvest Land Inc., Megaworld Corp., Filinvest Land Inc., Megaworld

Maynilad seeks access to La Mesa reservoir

Aims to cut water lost to pilferage, leaks to 40%

By Doris C. Dumlao

MANILAD SEES—Maynilad Water Services Inc., the water distribution unit of the Metro Pacific group, has appealed to the government to help avoid another water crisis in Metro Manila by addressing the concessionaire's lack of access to the La Mesa dam water reservoir, alongside the build of bulk water supply.

Maynilad, for its part, has committed to boost water distribution efficiency using state-of-the-art technology in bid, besides, top company officials said. Since the group led by Metro Pacific Investments Corp. took over Maynilad's west concession, non-revenue water (NRW) had gone down to 68.6 percent from a high of 63.7 percent.

"But the fundamental problem is still water supply," MWC president Jose Ma. Lim said in a press briefing of the investment arm of the company's parent First Philippine Holdings Corp.

Another problem, he pointed out, was Maynilad's lack of water impounding capacity as the previous concessionaire had given up its right to access the additional reservoir to run the concession's source costs. As such, the La Mesa reservoir is now being exclusively used by Manila Water Co., the Ayala-led concessionaire handling the east zone.

"We have raised the issue with regulators that in order to prevent this, we do from happening, we need to address water supply," Lim said.

Maynilad's proposal is a 50:50 percent sharing of the La Mesa reservoir. He added that Maynilad, in turn, would be willing to share in the attendant cost of MWC having maintained the facility in previous years.

Where the Metro Pacific group took over the water utility, Lim said it had started covering the reservoirs in the west zone, most of which were not functioning. "We have rehabilitated all of these but still there are small compared to La Mesa," he said.

Based on its NRW ratio, the water utility still loses half of the water it distributes to leaks and pilferage. The commitment is to further reduce NRW leakage to 40 percent by 2012. The group is thus focusing down Maynilad's source areas into smaller and manageable areas for greater focus and likewise using the Subaru technology to detect leakages in its pipelines.

Jerwin Dimaano, head of MWC management division at Maynilad, said the lack of water supply from Angat dam which supplies 97 percent of Metro Manila's bulk water supply was still affecting some areas. Of the bulk water supply, 60 percent goes to Maynilad while the rest goes to the La Mesa treatment plant.

The most practical route for Maynilad to boost bulk water supply, Lim said, would be to expand the capacity of the Putatan water treatment plant which is delivering 50 million liters of water per day (MLD) from Laguna Lake. By next month, Lim said the Putatan plant would be raised to 200 MLD. The next increase, he said, would pick up the capacity to 290 MLD which he said would provide a 28 percent supply increase.

"We take 2,000 MLD a day and four half of it so the 100 MLD (current capacity of Putatan) is already a 10 percent improvement," Lim said.

"We have ways to something that has to be approved [by regulators]," he said.

It was earlier reported that Maynilad and MWC are jointly resulting to propose to the government new sources of bulk water supply for the metropolis.

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

AyalaLand

Ayala Land Inc. (ALI) announces its shift to the GLOBE MANAGED IP-PBX SOLUTION for all telephone lines at its headquarters at Tower One and Exchange Plaza, Ayala Triangle, Ayala Avenue, Makati City.

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Corporate sector less dependent on bank loans

By Michelle V. Ramos

THE CORPORATE sector continues to enjoy a more significant measure of liquidity in the monetary sector of credit from banks with the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas revealing that funds raised from the equity and bond markets reached P1.30 billion in the first half.

In a report, the BSP said that over the last few years, companies have become less dependent on banks to fund their investment activities and other expenditure requirements. It said the bond and equity markets have also become key sources of capital.

Of the funds raised in the first semester, P39 billion was accounted for by those generated from sale of equities. The Bpsm market recently 540 percent rise from only 6.1 billion in the same period last year.

Officials said the increase was aided by an improved economic climate, which boosted appetite of foreign and local portfolio investors alike.

Meanwhile, P1.06 billion worth of capital was raised from the bond market in the first six months. The BSP said this was a 96 percent drop from the P286.4 billion in the same period a year ago, but noted the massive sale was a healthy level of absorption liquidity.

"While bank lending and liquidity remained strong, other sources of funds have remained strong, too," the BSP said in its latest quarterly addition report.

BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said the credibility cash in the equity and bond markets give symbiosis that the corporate sector may still be well supported even if banks adopt an even more lending standards.

From page B-9

June factory . . .

seven groups shrank, while 11 gained and one showed no year change.

Hiding by single-digit pride were prices of chemicals, miscellaneous manufactures, textiles, and ecosmetic cutwork.

On the other hand, double-digit gains were observed in footwear and rotating apparel (13.8 percent), and leather products (10 percent).

Other gainers were petroleum products, food, basic metals, transport equipment, tobacco, beverages, fabricated metals, rubber and plastic products, publishing and printing, and paper products.

Prices of wood products showed no change for the second month in a row.

One month-on-month basis, the PPI climbed around to an increase of 0.6 percent, mainly due to price gains in 12 product groups led by petroleum products at 3.4 percent.

The other price gainers were electrical machinery, non-electrical machinery, transport equipment, food, footwear and wearing apparel, non-metallic minerals, basic metals, miscellaneous manufactures, textiles, fabricated metals, leather, and rubber and plastic products.

There were two groups with prices that shrank, namely furniture and fixtures (down by 0.1 percent) and chemicals (-0.15 percent).

Compared to May prices, no changes were observed in five sectors including paper products, beverages, tobacco, publishing and printing, and wood and wood products.

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INFOTECH

Another 'Android' joins the fray

By Raquel P. Gomez

GLOBAL MOBILE phone maker LG Electronics has joined the Android fray by introducing an entry-level smartphone running on the Google-developed open source mobile operating system that is increasingly popular among handset makers.

LG refers to the LG Optimus (LG GT540), which is priced at only P9,2,500 when it hits the market this August, as the most affordable yet fashionable Android-powered smartphone.

While its price and textured design and colors, the LG Optimus is founded for first time users of smartphone devices, according to Herb Montes of LG Electronics.

As an Android phone, it runs on version 2.1 of the operating system, but is upgradable to the current version 2.1), the LG Optimus allows users to enjoy Google apps and synchronize automatically with Google mobile services.

For example, the user who logs in using his or her Google account can already enjoy and use YouTube, Gmail, Gtalk and Google Maps in their Web services—experienced by active widgets—can be accessed from any of the several home screens of the LG Optimus.

As an Internet device, the LG Optimus is also enhanced with features that connect the user to social networking functions such as Facebook and Twitter.

LG Optimus features the SR Mate apps, which offer integrated access to social networking sites (SNS) to convenient platform. It can manage multiple SNS accounts, while a dedicated Social Networking Client allows users to easily keep track of their Facebook, Twitter and Bebo accounts.

As a full Internet smartphone, the LG Optimus is a multi-finger as the SNS widgets provide real-time status updates directly to the homescreen, which the user can view while still accessing and searching the phone's content for information seamlessly.

This handset, like any other Android powered smartphones, features an Android homescreen, but gives the user the option to use an LG homescreen created by manufacturer for its popular Cookie lineup of touch phones.

In fact, the LG Optimus features a total of seven homescreens that can be customized according to user's preference.

As a multimedia device, the LG Optimus comes equipped with a 3 megapixel camera that supports geo-tagging, auto face-tagging and "face-in-action" technology that allows the user to create and share multimedia content from the photo. Likewise, the phone has a built-in video editor with storyboard function, allowing the users to add music and text to videos directly on the phone.

An added plus to the phone's ability to play DivX and XviD videos directly without separate encoding.

The LG Optimus also features the Android Market, where the user can access more than 180,000 apps...many of them still for free—via 3G data connection or through Wi-Fi.

The open source Android mobile OS was developed by Google in partnership with the Open Handset Alliance, a Google-led consortium of hardware, software and telecom companies (that includes HTC, Intel, Motorola, Samsung, LG and Qualcomm) devoted to advancing open standards for mobile devices.

Netbook now comes in tablet form

TAIWANESE PC and PC components maker Gigabyte has introduced another netbook variation that incorporated tablet PC functionality.

The TS100 is a "net tablet" that runs on Windows 7 and is powered by Intel Atom N450 (1.66 GHz). It features a 10.1-inch touchscreen display that can swivel up to 180 degrees. The panel can cover the whole keyboard area and it can also serve as a slate on which the user can scribble notes with a stylus or by merely using his finger.

The TS100 features the Smart Manager Control, or a set of tools and applications that enhances the touch user interface features of the net-tablet.

But example, the user can rotate the screen orientation either horizontally or vertically through the "screen rotation" icon in the Smart Manager Control. The "touch-screen setting" icon can be used in adjusting the touch panel settings.

The user can also easily configure certain features from the Smart Manager Control, such as enabling or disabling Wireless LAN, Bluetooth, 3G (some models have 3G or GSM'S connectivity to the Internet), and the Web camera.

Also interesting is TS100's "one pen" application, a hand writing recognition tool that trans a Word or pantechtouch application into instant notepad where the user can doodle or write notes. This application provides an intuitive and easy-to-use alternative to typing or entering text.

Gigabyte's newest netbook has a multi-touch pad. The track pad below the full-sized keyboard allows the user to pinch the pages to zoom or unzoom Web content or images onscreen.

Although looking rather bulky compared to other netbooks in the market today, the TS100 is quite light since its cover and interior are made mainly of hard plastic.

TS100

The TS100 is a good alternative to a netbook as it features touch user interface that can be useful for presentation work or just doodling about. Raquel P. Gomez

Land registration goes high-tech

By Rizz T. Olchondra

READY TO lock out your title's savings for a property to sell your own and later bequeath to your children?

You need to verify if the real estate you're buying actually exists, and the Land Registration Authority (LRA) will help you with this—electronically.

The LRA has made a bold move to comply with the E-Commerce law and to turn its century-old manual registration into a technology-driven system through the so-called Land Titling Computerization Project.

Computerization uses physical reference such as municipal maps, cadastral maps, and others to coordinate with satellite imaging to show the placement of new and existing registered lots in relation to each other.

The software employed uses the Land Information and Border Land-marks entered in the title.

LRA deputy administrator Ofelia E. Mercy-Sta. Maria told the business that the electronic plotting is not only an added service to owners of newly titled land. It also helps in verifying the validity land titles, which takes up about 40 percent of the agency's daily workload.

"There are cases where the land plotted is shown to take up the space of other existing land titles, or apparently takes up part of a road? These are warning signs of potential property buyers," she said.

The computerization project is also seen to protect the original land titles from normal wear and tear, disasters such as fire and flooding and mismanagement.

Titles are easily retrievable and are stored in electronic form in the LRA office and in six "offshore sites."

The LRA's services include original registration; subsequent registrations (registration of transfers, mortgages, etc.); division and consolidation of registered parcels; registration of condominium; reconstitution of title (i.e., replacement of lost or destroyed titles); replacement of owner's duplicate of title; and annotation of certificates.

To date, 81 registries of deeds of the LRA have been automated out of the major 106 by 2011.

LRA SYSTEM shows overlapping plots

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BUSINESS

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Conglomerates investing more in IT, says EMC

Firms expect bigger returns in future

By Abigail L. Ho

LOCAL BUSINESS conglomerates are now more inclined to spend on information technology infrastructure and services, knowing that such investments will have huge returns for them in the future, according to IT multinational EMC.

EMC Philippines country manager Ronnie Lacsamana said the company was now conducting "roadmap" sessions for local conglomerates, to determine the best IT processes for their specific needs.

"Local companies now see the need to do this. They want to have a clear roadmap that they can adopt," he said in a briefing Friday. "We're now in talks with a number of local conglomerates who are in the process of choosing their technology and service providers."

He declined to name the conglomerates EMC Philippines was in discussions with, saying only that they were all included in "highly diverse" businesses.

"The local conglomerates are talking to us about building their own private cloud, or a private computing environment that can serve their internal needs. A lot of them are now doing an inventory of what they already have. They're thinking of what to do with what they have and how they can add to that," he said.

"Companies will not throw away what they have and spend good money on new things. They want to know what they can keep and what else they need to enhance their businesses. This won't be a one-shot deal for them. This will be a journey," he added.

EMC started operating in the country in 2008, initially focused on storage offerings. After 18 years, the company had expanded to provide a full range of products and services for its local clients.

Lacsamana said the company grew by 18 percent in the second quarter, fueled by its leadership positions in the mid-range, high-end, and overall external storage markets here.

Just in the first half, he said the company was able to secure 19 new customers across the enterprise and commercial segments.

"The first half was good for us. We experienced growth despite the election uncertainty and a global economy that has yet to totally recover," he said.

For the remainder of the year, he said EMC Philippines aimed to further boost its market share, introduce new products and services, and expand its partnerships with distributors and resellers.

Nido sees 90 more oil prospects in Palawan

By Amy R. Remo

AUSTRALIAN FIRM Nido Petroleum Ltd. said it had identified more than 90 prospects within offshore northwestern Palawan alone, which were estimated to be holding as much as 11.4 billion barrels of oil.

In a presentation before the Australian Energy Pioneers Conference, Nido Petroleum said these prospective areas were located within its five petroleum service contract areas: Service Contract 54(C), which covers the Galoc oil field; SC 54A, Nido's oil property; SC 54B, Gindara, Lapu Lapu and Pilipinas Deep drilling candidates; SC 58, and SC 63, Alcaiban 3 discovery.

Based on Nido's "most likely oil in place scenario," SC 54 is estimated to host 5.916 billion barrels; SC54A, 2.08 million barrels; SC54B, 2.400 billion barrels; SC 63, 3.071 billion barrels, and SC 14C, 82-million barrels.

According to Nido, the SW Palawan basin is the Philippines' most prolific basin, as 76 percent of the exploration wells drilled in the area yielded oil and/or gas.

The company targets to start its 'multi-rinse' five-well drilling program by early next year, to give the company an exposure to up to 3 billion barrels of oil, starting with three service contracts.

Nido listed plans to drill a well within the Galoc-1a prospect, covered by Service Contract 54B; Binuko discovery (SC 63); Bahyana prospect (SC 58); Kalayaan (in SC 63); and the Lawaan discovery (SC 54A).

According to Nido, the Bahyana prospect is expected to be the most promising of the five, with oil in place estimates of over 1.3 billion barrels while the Binuko discovery (SC 63) is seen yielding 1 billion barrel of oil.

The Kalayaan prospect is estimated to hold 239 million barrels of oil; Alcaiban with 222 million barrels of oil, and the Lawaan, with 21 million barrels.

"Planning for the program has commenced with the tendering for long lead items for the initial wells (in SC 54B (Gindara), SC 63 (Alcaiban) and SC 54A (Lawaan).

Subject to rig availability, the program is anticipated to commence (within the first quarter) of 2011," Nido said.

Nido further noted that the five-well program was designed to deliver on a number of key strategic objectives such as to materialize the chances of making a significant commercial discovery by drilling a balanced mix of both low medium and high risk/value prospects; and to test key play types across the basin which will provide additional technical data to further de-risk the portfolio.

Aimed at unlocking the potential of the Northwest Palawan basin, the drilling program is expected to help Nido meet future service contract work program obligations and to secure land tenure over acreages over the next 18 to 24 months.

EDC's Negros plant still running below capacity

By Amy R. Remo

LOPEZ-LED ENERGY Development Corp. is looking for options to maximize the use of its 49-megawatt Northern Negros geothermal power plant, which has been generating only less than a fifth of its rated capacity since last year.

"We are still way short of our targets [for the Northern Negros plant] with a steam supply of only 7 MW for a 49 MW plant," said EDC president and COO Richard B. Tantoco.

Tantoco said the company had drafted a recovery development plan and recommissioned a third party to review the plan prior to making a decision on whether to do more infill drilling.

Data from the Department of Energy earlier showed that EDC, the country's biggest producer of geothermal energy, had shortened some 96.57 billion kilowatt-hours in the Northern Negros facility for a five-year period.

"We're also reviewing options to optimize the use of the power station," he added.

It was only in May 2009 that the EDC recommissioned the Northern Negros facility, after being shut down for almost two due to insufficient steam production.

EDC said the decline in steam production was mainly due to the "clogging of the wells by calcite minerals found in the current geothermal field. The clogging prevents the wells from releasing the steam from its source underneath the earth."

However, the field's steam production was expected to be good for only 15 to 16 MW of power.

Since 2007, the Northern Negros geothermal facility, which is EDC's first fully-owned power plant, had been operating under repair.

EDC currently accounts for 62 percent of the country's total installed geothermal capacity.

Aside from the geothermal power facilities, the company also owns and operates the 120-MW Pantabangan-Masiway hydro electric plants. It also has renewable energy service contracts for planned wind power projects.

According to Tantoco, the company is poised to further increase its generating capacity by adding more than 300 MW to its portfolio by 2015.

It targets to invest about $1 billion over the next five years in the construction of greenfield geothermal and wind power facilities.

Balance Sheet
As of June 30, 2010
(Head Office and Branches)

Feeble US recovery on the ropes, experts say

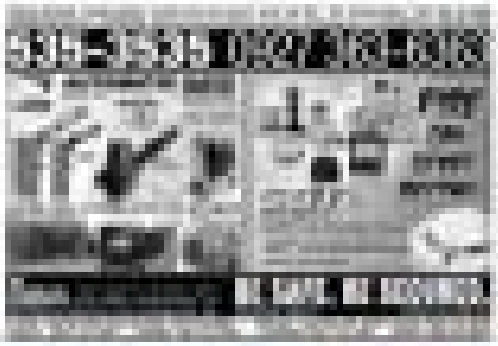
Google acquires Slide social media for $182M

Nonfarm payrolls fell in July

NISSAN PATROL ROYALE LAUNCH

A Royale Affair

US consumer borrowing down



BUSINESS

Wall St. to keep close eye on key Fed talks

Rate-setting body considering policy-based stimulus

NEW YORK—Wall Street will keep a close eye on a key Federal Reserve policy meeting this week amid concerns the US economic recovery could stall following larger-than-expected job losses.

US shares ended the week higher despite a modest pickup in paper Friday showing the economy shed more jobs than expected in July.

Investors were reassured that economic growth, which resumed in the middle of last year after a brutal recession, could be derailed as unemployment remained at a high rate of 9.5 percent and as Americans keep their wallets tightly shut.

With interest rates at virtually zero percent, analysts suggested the Federal Reserve were setting Tuesday would consider other monetary policy-based stimulus.

It includes action by the central bank to directly pump money into the economy again, like it did at the height of the financial crisis.

"Investors may be anticipating an extension or expansion of the Fed's policy of quantitative easing, or massive purchases of Treasuries and other securities to provide further liquidity to the economy," said analyst Frederic Dickson at D.A. Davidson & Co.

"The rumors of quantitative easing have been a good part of the recent rally in stocks, so if the data continue to come in relatively benign, and the Fed does nothing, it's hard to say that this rally will be sustained," cautioned Wells Fargo analyst Gina Martin.

Despite persistent economic concerns, the Dow ended the week 1.6 percent higher on Friday at 10,433.56, the first time the blue-chip index closed above the 10,400 level since May 14.

The tech-rich Nasdaq composite index was up 3.3 percent over the week at 2,288.47, while the broader S&P 500 index jumped 1.8 percent at 1,122.64.

Aside from better-than-expected company earnings, investors were also buoyed by data earlier in the week showing business activity in the manufacturing and service sectors continuing to expand even as economic growth may have slowed this year.

The markets are also expecting actions by President Barack Obama's administration to spur jobs and growth ahead of November midterm elections that could see his Democratic Party lose control of Congress.

If the next monthly jobs report to be released in September does not begin to show stark improvement in the labor number, then Washington needs to come back "with their fiscal guns blazing and orchestrate an across-the-board tax cut for all consumers and businesses for at least the next two years," he said.

This week, the markets are expected to hear economic news that have a more positive spin overall, analysts at IDS Global Insight said.

For example, a government retail sales report for July could show sales moderately higher, they said.

AFP

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HP has enough talent to replace Hurd

MARK Hurd

SAN FRANCISCO—Hewlett-Packard Co. said it was looking inside and outside the company to find a replacement for Mark Hurd, who resigned on Friday following a sexual harassment investigation that found Hurd violated HP's policy for standard business practices.

Analysts said that HP has a deep bench of executive talent to draw from, even excluding interim CEO Cathie Lesjak, who had said she was not interested in taking the chief executive job on a full-time basis. Here are five of HP's most high-profile executives who could be in line to replace Hurd.

Todd Bradley: A veteran manager with stints at GE Capital, Stellis Corp. and Palm Inc. under his belt, Bradley has headed HP's personal computer business since 2005. Under his watch, HP became the world's No. 1 PC maker, displacing the once-fearsome Dell Inc., while boosting operating margins in the hardscrabble hardware business.

Dianne Ruthkosi Dubinsky oversees HP's corporate strategy, including mergers and acquisitions, and its technology plans.

The HP chief strategy and technology officer controls HP's nearly $2 billion research and development efforts, and has spearheaded its push into software and services with big-ticket acquisitions like EDS and Mercury Interactive.

Ayanendu Joshi: HP's imaging and printing group is one of the company's most profitable businesses, and the high-energy Joshi has become synonymous with the business since taking the reins in 2002. Joshi joined HP as a research and development engineer in 1980 and sits on Internet giant Yahoo Inc.'s board of directors.

Ann Livermore: Livermore has become acquainted with many corners of HP's sprawling business in her 26-year career with the company, with management positions in sales, research and development and business management. In her current role as executive vice president of HP's roughly $54 billion enterprise business, Livermore oversees the company's server, storage and software and services operations.

Enos Enos-Hill: One of the newer faces in HP's senior management team, Enos-Hill joined HP last year from storage giant EMC Corp., where he worked for 22 years.

Reuters

AIG starts talks on government exit

NEW YORK—American International Group Inc. chief executive Robert Benmosche is hoping this is the beginning of the end for the insurer's massive taxpayer bailout.

AIG's quarterly results topped Wall Street's expectations on Friday, and Benmosche said the company is actively looking to repay the US government, which owns nearly 80 percent of what was once the world's largest insurer.

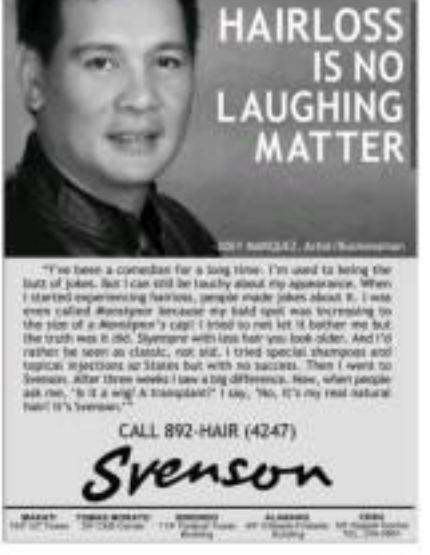
Benmosche, who earlier this year threatened to quit for the second time since he was named CEO, said in a statement that the insurer is actively engaged in figuring out how it can pay back its debt to the Federal Reserve Bank of New York "as quickly as possible."

"I believe that when we are done here, we will have a wealthy more focused low-risk core of the largest insurance companies in the world," he told Reuters in a phone interview.

AIG nearly collapsed in September 2008 from credit default swaps that left it on the hook for tens of billions of dollars in payments to some of the biggest US and European banks.

After the government rescue, AIG has been drawing assets to repay taxpayers, who are still owed more than $140 billion.

Reuters



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LIFESTYLE Arts&Books

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Pinoy tenor who made it to La Scala debuts in Manila Aug. 14

By Pablo A. Tariman
Contributor

THE VOCAL event of the month is the Philippine debut of Filipino tenor Arthur Espiritu at Philamlife Theater on Aug. 14, 8 p.m.

Espiritu, a native of Marsing, Ifugi, became the only Filipino tenor to sing at La Scala di Milan when he performed Armando in Mozart's "Cosi fan Tutte" in 2007.

(But the first Filipino singer to make it to La Scala was really Juan Institute José Mauregard Santiago Pena, a cousin of Carmen Guerrero-Nakpil, he was Spatafucile in "Melodrache" in the 1932-1933 season of La Scala.)

The tenor got to La Scala when he joined the Belvedere Voice Competition in Vienna and got the Scala award.

For his Manila debut, Espiritu will share the limelight with soprano Rachelle Gerodias and pianist Najib Ismail. The concert will highlight the art of beautiful singing (bel canto).

Espiritu has just wrapped up an engagement in Stadt Theater St. Gallen in Switzerland, where he sang Rossini's "Il Mistero Universal" and a "Messa di Requiem."

Rare interpreter

"The venue is an open-air theater and is a big cathedral where the sonorities are always a challenge," Espiritu said. "It takes a while for the sound to travel so you have to wait a little bit longer in between phrases. It was the first time I've ever sung opera in an open-air venue. I did remember singing my parsimony performance, and towards the end of the opera, it started raining. We did not stop! It was very fitting because the opera was about the story of Noah's Ark...my character Cadmo [King of the barrage] gets drowned by the deluge. So it was quite fitting that it rained at the end. The audience had their umbrellas and stayed the whole time for about 10-15 minutes. It rained even harder after the opera ended."

For his debut, Espiritu will be heard as a rare interpreter of Mozart, Rossini and Donizetti—a rare and a most welcome departure from the Puccini and Verdi favorites of music lovers obsessed with nothing but high notes.

But are Rossini and Mozart arias just as challenging for the singer?

"Rossini, Donizetti and Mozart or even the earlier music of Bach and Handel are, in fact, just as tough as those of Puccini and Verdi," Espiritu explained. "It requires a different voice, of course, but it also requires good command of the coloratura passages, a good technique in using right at the passaggi area of your voice. That is where your voice begins to shift

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45th SINGAPORE National Day

SINGAPORE 2010 YOUTH OLYMPIC GAMES:

World's biggest youth games hosted by a youthful nation

[illegible] of hosting tradition take a middle-kid twist when the first-ever Youth Olympic Games (YOG) debut in host nation Singapore.

When the Youth Olympic Flame lights the cauldron to mark the opening of the world's first Youth Olympic Games (YOG) on August 14, it marks not only the end of the Journey of the Youth Olympic Flame that saw it ignite ceremonial worldwide starting from Olympia, Greece and in 4 intended across five cities – Perth, Dubai, Mexico City, Auckland and finally across five continents – but also the grand finale of two and a half years of the Singapore Youth Olympic Games Organizing Committee's hard work and preparation for the inaugural Games.

In 2005, Singapore was chosen over eight other candidate cities to host the world's first YOG – Singapore 2010 Youth Olympic Games in Singapore 2010 in short.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) was won over by Singapore's excellent infrastructure and low traffic to launch its exciting Youth Olympic Games. Efficient transportation systems, a world-class IT network, strong governance and finance as well as reliable security as hallmarks of the Singapore experience.

The country also has a growing enthusiasm for sports, with the Singapore Sports School established in 2004 to develop sporting talent and recent successes in the fields of table tennis and badminton giving the country much to cheer about.

Another of Singapore's winning attributes is its outstanding international [illegible] with many [illegible] and [illegible] and a thriving literary and arts scene. Singapore is the ideal destination to create that intercultural, meaningful and successful experience for the 3,600 young athletes and officials (ages up to 20) from the Olympic Committees (NOCs).

Vision of the Singapore 2010 Youth Olympic Games

The Singapore 2010 Youth Olympic Games athletes are between 14-18 years old. All 26 sports on the Olympic programme are up for competition, but with a total of a number of 4 days.

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[1] Summary of Essential Facts, 8 April 2009, Cord Blood Forum Website, http://www.cordbloodforum.org/about-cord-blood.html

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MESSAGE FROM THE AMBASSADOR

Dear friends,

Mabuhay!

Singapore celebrates its 48th National Day today.

Looking back, the past year has been a challenging one for Singapore and the Philippines. Economic growth was slowed down by the global economic crisis that we are now well on the way to recovery. We are also well on the way to meeting the Millennium Development Goals this year. We had a successful visit by our Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr George Yeo, to the Philippines in November last year. Our bilateral trade was recently found by Foreign Economy Mr Alfredo Pascual, the head of the agency, to be "complementary" and "natural". Over the past 40 years of the relationship, there has been much that we have learned. Minister Yeo also visited the Philippines in June for the inauguration of President Benigno S. Aquino III's administration where we met with many high-level leaders and had a productive meeting with them.

Our two countries share the belief that growth and prosperity are only possible when there is peace and stability in the region. Both countries are committed to the principles of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and we have worked together well to promote our shared interests, especially as well as in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum. Our common commitment to a strong ASEAN Community has also strengthened our relationship further.

Our bilateral economic ties are growing. In 2006, the Philippines was our 13th largest trading partner, moving up a place from the year before, while Singapore was the Philippines' fifth largest trading partner. Singapore's direct investments in the Philippines totalled over $1.5 billion. Singapore is currently the Philippines' 3rd largest export market. Investments by Singapore companies in the Philippines are also sizeable and growing. Singapore companies have been operational in the Philippines for many years including the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Company, the Manila Electric Company, Singapore Technologies Telemedia, Singapore Power International, and Keppel Corporation.

The tourist component of our bilateral air services agreement will surely help us boost even more trade and business flows. At the Fifth Annual Champs Awards 2013 held recently, Cebu Pacific was recognized as the top Southeast Asian airline that registered the highest growth in passenger traffic last year. In 2010, 432,268 Filipinos visited Singapore. We expect more Filipinos to visit our iconic attractions in Singapore, such as Universal Studios Singapore, Resorts World Sentosa and Marina Bay Sands. In fact, Filipinos already rank as the number one visitors to Universal Studios Singapore. The Philippines' tourism sector also stands to gain from greater air services liberalisation. Budget is the 11th most popular destination for Singaporeans currently, the Philippines, with its rich beaches and natural attractions, has great potential to see tourists from Singapore and elsewhere.

The new Philippine government's emphasis on education as a means to economic development is shared by us. Singapore firmly believes that human resource development is vital for social and economic development. Singapore has always had a strong emphasis on education and we have invested substantial resources in developing students under the Singapore Cooperation Programme (SCP). To date, more than 1,900 Filipinos have received training courses and scholarships under the SCP. The Singapore Government also offers scholarships for Filipino students to pursue high-school and undergraduate studies in Singapore in our schools, junior colleges and universities. 140-160 slots for undergraduate programmes are also given for the Ateneo de Manila University. Today, it is indeed our hope that through these training courses and academic programmes, the participants and students will acquire knowledge and skills to positively contribute to their communities and organisations when they return to the Philippines.

I also wish to pay a tribute to the Filipino community residing in Singapore. Besides the workers who have enabled us to achieve solid economic growth, the OFWs/Filipino Singaporeans have made significant contributions to our economic outlook. Regardless whether they are employed as domestic helpers, drivers, academics, retail employees, IT professionals, professors, or healthcare giants, they are hardworking, disciplined and law-abiding. The Filipino community, along with other foreign nationals working and living in Singapore, help to make Singapore a multi-ethnic, dynamic and global city.

Let me end this Message section of Singapore's Diamond Day celebrations with a wish of the close relationship and goodwill between our two countries. Historically tied as ASEAN brothers, we wish the new Philippine administration under the leadership of President Benigno S. Aquino III every success in its efforts to achieve prosperity, stability and progress for the people of the Philippines.

Warmest regards,

AMBASSADOR S SEETHARAMI

World's biggest youth games . . .

From page C2

plines and events.

The most important change of the games is how it caters to a younger and more technologically-savvy crowd, reflecting IOC President Jacques Rogge's vision of a tightened sporting competition, which positively combines the elements of sport, education and fun.

Modern sport, traditional values

Competition formats for canoe-kayak, modern pentathlon and basketball have been adapted with young athletes in mind.

Take basketball as an example. Instead of the traditional five-member-a-side team, the game now follows the popular 3-on-3 street basketball format. Teams are now smaller with three members and they play on a half court with one basketball hoop. With the first team that scores 21 points winning, the game in turn serves more fast-paced, high-energy and adrenaline-packed.

As on-3 basketball makes its formal debut at Singapore 2010, expect it to catch on worldwide, with the Federation of International Basketball Associations (Fiba) working on international rules for youths and achieved from all around the globe to interact with programmes such as FriendshipTOO, which sees national schools joining up with each of the 205 different NOCs to host cultural exchanges, and the Singapore 2010 Friendship Camp for athletes.

Winning and learning

An Olympic first, the Cultural Education Programme (CEP) to be featured at Singapore 2010 aims to educate athletes on issues over five themes – Olympism, Skills Development, Mind, Being and Healthy Lifestyle, Social Responsibility and Expressing themselves.

Journey of the Youth Olympic Flame

athletes can choose from a range of 50 different activities conducted in seven interweaving formats, including Clear sole's Champion – the stars from the 26 Olympic sports, as well as a host of community projects, discovery activities and other adventure-culture days can explore the exotic Singapore's offshore islands.

With such an exciting line-up, it's guaranteed that this is one learning experience the young Olympians will enjoy.

Respecting the environment, sustaining the future

Sustainable development is another approach Singapore 2010 is taking to connect with the youth, and to emphasise the importance of the environment.

Spectators are encouraged to take public transport to the competition venues, with their free transport cards provided with every ticket purchased.

Recycling and reuse is encouraged on many levels – from the competition venues, which are embedded from entering sports facilities, to games equipment that will be refurbished to schools and sports organisations after the event.

Even Merlion, the Singapore 2010 mascot duo, Merly and Lyn, it's passionate environmentalist who works hard to spread the message of sustainable development and is vegetarian by choice!

Environmentalists to take one of the main themes of the CEP where athletes get to go on green journeys to BestPark and Marina Barrage, two of Singapore's newest environmental-themed attractions to learn more about the ecosystem and water sustainability.

Non-governmental organisations such as the United Nations Environment Programme (Unep), United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef) and the World Anti-Doping Programme (Wada) have also been roped in to help develop the programme to enable the young athletes to learn more about environmental issues.

Diverse array of Singapore food and melting pot of cultures

Young athletes can get a taste of what Singapore has to offer in the Youth Olympic Village (YOV) where the athletes are staying during the games.

Mainstream chicken rice, curry or cake and indoor eat joints are just some of the national delicacies that will be provided for athletes.

A veritable feast of 600 buffet items will be available at every meal, a first which requires an army of cooks, 870 tonnes of food and more than 50 different types.

The YOV's World Culture Village is where you can find a collection of cultural booths featuring each of the 205 participating NOCs, hosted by Singaporean youths. Evening cultural festivals with exciting dance performances, inspirational artwork and cultural exchanges add to the vibrant atmosphere of the village, where youth athletes can make friends and unwind in between competitions and rigorous training.

The games of the future

The youthful touch is most evident at Singapore 2010 when it comes to technology. After all, Singapore is one of the most wired cities in the world.

Web 2.0 young people living early adopters of the latest gadgets, it's no surprise that Singapore 2010 features some of the most sophisticated games.

Smartphones with personalised telecast features will be made available for athletes and officials. With a touch of a button, training and competition dates, times telecasts and competition not periods are all easily accessed. 3D navigational maps can be retrieved on the phones to enable the young athletes to find their way around the competition venues with great ease.

Breaking through the language barrier with athletes from around the world? It will be an easy feat when anyone from around the world logs on to the BlogOnSite Community (www.singapore2010.sg/community). It can translate seven official languages in real-time by simply enabling the "translate to find" option.

Now the world can speak the same language, or at least type it.

Starring... your future sports heroes

Just like the inaugural Winter Olympics started in 1924 and the first Paralympics that was launched in 1960, the Youth Olympic Games is an exciting evolution of the Olympic Movement to bring the values of sports excellence to youth and people of the world.

On 14th August 2010, we, against the backdrop of the spectacular Singapore skyline on the world's largest floating stage in the Floating Marina, the Youth Olympic Games will spark an even brighter future of sporting excellence, friendship and respect as the world eagerly vows in to catch the first glimpse of the champions of tomorrow.

If you can't wait till then, find out more about Singapore 2010 Youth Olympic Games at www.singapore2010.sg today.

Congratulations to the Republic of Singapore on its 45th National Day!

Greetings from DBS

Congratulations to The Republic of Singapore

on the occasion of its 45th National Day

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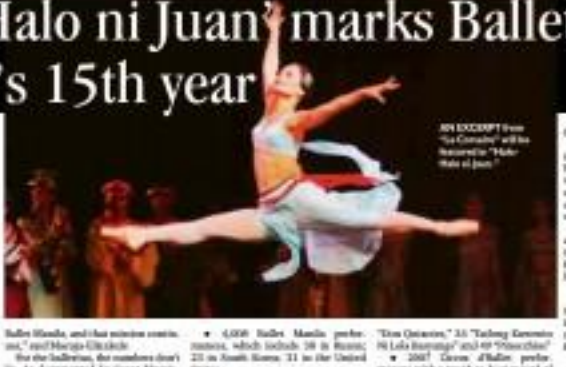
'Halo-Halo ni Juan' marks Ballet Manila's 15th year



JEN EXCERPT from "La Corrida" will be featured in "Halo-Halo ni Juan."

FOUNDED BY prima ballerina Lisa Macuja-Elizalde, Ballet Manila has become the foremost proponent of classical ballet, using the Russian Vaganova method.

This year, the group kicks off its 15th season with "Halo-Halo ni Juan" the Ballet Manila Crystal Gala!

It is a concert that celebrates and captures the essence of BM's roots. Join us the country's premiere dance company featuring an all-original OPM suite, new modernized choreographies by Ram Damian and Jacque Vilalon; and excerpts from a world classic.

"Halo-Halo" premieres on Aug. 20, Tuesday 7:30 p.m. at Mise Theatre, CCP Complex, Roxas Boulevard. Encore Gala Succeeding shows are scheduled on Aug. 21 and 28, at 1 and 5 p.m., and Aug. 22 and 29, at 3 p.m.

"Bringing ballet to the people is the inspiration that led to the creation of Ballet Manila, and that mission continues," said Macuja-Elizalde.

For the ballerinas, the numbers don't lie. As documented by Grace Macuja, Lisa's father and president of the Ballet Manila Foundation, the group has racked up the following jaw-dropping statistics:

- 4,000 Ballet Manila performances, which include 38 in Russia; 23 in South Korea; 11 in the United States;
- 3,879 Philippine performances in 48 cities and towns nationwide;
- 327 full length ballet performances with 74 "Nutcrackers," 52 "Don Quixotes," 33 "Tadong Enrestos Ni Lola Basyangs" and 49 "Prinsesa."
- 2007 Dawn d'Ballet performances with a tough-to-beat record of 3,02 performances of the pioneer holiday production "Dolce."
- 1,121 ballets on the 81st repertoire.

Beyond the figures lie the passion and the commitment to excellence in dance.

Lisa stated, "Our direction is an organic one as the girls we are celebrating. Promote the classics; create new works; develop several generations of audience and dancers; and always tell a good story—preferable on pointe, without having to say a single word."

The latest "Halo-Halo" production also commemorates Lisa's year long celebration of her 25th anniversary as a professional ballerina, which kicked off last October.

"Halo-Halo ni Juan" The Ballet Manila Crystal Gala! is sponsored by the Manila Broadcasting Company, Ger-Cruz Bank of Singapore, Island Bros and Ralph's Bistro and Spirits.

For tickets and other inquiries, please call Ballet Manila at 4886282 or 5255967 or Ticketworld at 891 9999; e-mail info@balletmanila.ph; visit www.balletmanila.ph or www.ticketworld.com.ph.

MSO, pianist Rudolf Golez perform in Cagayan de Oro City

By Mecay Pacayra
Correspondent

RUDOLF Golez

MANILA Symphony Orchestra

WHEN THE Philharmonic Auditorium Hall in Cagayan de Oro City troop to the gala tomorrow night (Aug. 10) showcasing the Manila Symphony Orchestra and the featured soloist, Rudolf Peluso Golez, in celebration of the birth centenary of Don Pelayo Pelaez, co-founders of Liceo de Cagayan University, how many of the concert-goers would probably know that on center stage is an international prize-winning pianist who uses his art to pursue his passion as an environment activist?

"I try to use my art to make the world a better place to live in," said the dashing yuppie who has become some sort of urban legend in Cagayan de Oro for fearlessly chasing trucks carrying illegally cut logs in his sleek, orange Mercedes Benz to the nearest police station in the wee hours at night.

Of late, Rudolf has been giving free piano concerts at Liceo de Cagayan University's Rudolf Hall, the first theater for the performing arts in Mindanao, to benefit his pet project, the Solar Rivers, Life Giver Foundation. The foundation has been doing research, clean-up drives and projects related to the Cagayan de Oro River.

In fact, Rudolf has launched two "river yachts"—light-weight watercrafts which navigate from Nazareth district near the Macajalar Bay all the way to the mouth of Bluangalar River. That's almost two miles of rivers cruising, with a name of one to journey's end.

"You escape the road traffic, and you get an many from is all breather as well," said Golez. "It's an alternative means of transportation for our students...and a scenic getaway, too."

Travel and education

Rudolf should know about travel.

After a childhood made memorable by a string of piano teachers—first, his mother, Dr. Rudolfita H Peluso, who rescued him on the piano when he was four years old; followed by Sr. Lourdes Allegado, Nelly Eanlan, Mimi Tiendal and Fr. Theodore Murnane, SVD—Rudolf lined off to Peru York City, where he spent his high school years at the Juilliard School of Music Preparatory Division under the tutelage of Seymour Lipkin.

Rudolf has since studied piano under Josemary Ena, trained Cesa (UP Diliman), Dr. Solomon Mikowsky, Jesus Arigal Rodriguez and Cecilio Tirlos Jr. Tuscelle and Villa-Jesus Aguirre, Reynaldo Reyes, Ani Vitali (Hong Kong) and Russell Brandon (Dublin).

In 2004, Rudolf earned a career international jury in Seoul, Lumpur, who trained him the solo prizewinner in the 1st Asean International Chapin Piano Competition.

Rudolf is one of the youngest piano virtuosi in the country to received the Cultivo in Singhe award from the Provincial Government of Cebu and was named Artist in Residence of Mindanao Oriental.

His concerts are concentrated in the Philippines and the United States, where he was well received there in 2008.

Latest triumph

Rudolf's latest triumph was his debut at the Main Theater of the Cultural Center of the Philippines, where he performed as a featured soloist of the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra under composer/conductor Chitchit Hufflen. He played Ita Ishii's most impressionistic work, "Nights in the Gardens of Spain."

As a pianist, Erskin said, "I want to explore the development of the body of work of one major composer, and discover the multiple complexity of an artist—his styles, his concerns, the full range of his personality and his powers."

As an environment activist, Golez said: "We are responsible for the world we live in, and we are responsible for it for future generations."

The Manila Symphony Orchestra, and Rudolf Peluso Golez, under the baton of maestro Arturo Molina, will perform at Rudolfa Hall in Cagayan de Oro City tomorrow (Aug. 10) at 8 p.m. For details, please call (088) 8584093 to 95 loc. 109.

Chin-Chin, Mike Austria hold joint art exhibit at Rave gallery

CHIN-CHIN Gutierrez

RAVE ART Gallery (F.Ad. Magbatoon Street and Roxas Ave. near Araneta Stadium, QC) is hosting the exhibit "One World," featuring the art works of artists Chin-Chin Gutierrez and Mike Austria.

Chin-Chin, who appeared on the cover of Time as one of the international news magazine's Asian Heroes for 2003, has mounted five solo exhibits: "Whispers of a New World; Carousel and Carnival" (2000); "Fledgerazzi of Paris" (2005); "Music of Love" I, "Music of Love" II (2008); and "Journey to Love" (2010). She was also part of the 100 Painters group show at the CCP in 2004.

Austria has solid credentials as an artist.

"Environment and family are my favorite subjects," he said. "Nature is being exploited and denigrated by man. Globalization has led to maintenance, loss of identity, and widespread moral decline."

His latest solo exhibit was "Tanging Ina mo" in Shoten 4. Other exhibits: "Buhay at Buhay" "Hugis Ng Pag-ibig," "Adventure's Presentation," "Langit at Lupa," and "Roots, Ngayon at Kahapon."

"The homeworld on how the twin embellish of Chin-Chin and Mike. Their body of work is amazing!" said Rave gallery owner Mimie Tolen.

Call 4110373 or 3741186.

Travails and triumphs...

From page C3

rehearsing in buses, and so on.

"There were six competitions separated into three months," Calalang told a homecoming press conference-cum-lunch held at the UST Tan Yan Kee Student Center building. "There were 35 choirs around the world, and you bring in the Philippine flag. You cannot bring in the kind of pressure..."

Momentous achievement

The final competition was the choir of the World Choir Olympics Trophy in North Wales, United Kingdom. And as everybody knows by now, the UST Singers won—it was their second time to win this highly coveted title.

The momentous achievement duplicated the feat of the Philippine Madrigal Singers in twice winning the European Grand Prix in Choral Singing.

Incidentally, during the press conference, Calalang was asked how he would rate Ateneo's win, and he replied by saying that Calalang was asked how he would rate themselves against the Mads. The duo applause, laughter, and even boos from the highly partisan crowd which included UST Conservatory of Music dean and Cultural Center of the Philippines artistic director Raul Sunico.

"The Mad Spirit and the UST Singers are very good friends, so there is no problem," Calalang diplomatically replied. "Along with the other choirs, we are on the same boat, the Philippines in the world, nation building."

UST CHORAL director Fidel Calalang says he had to wait hours in the middle of the European tour when his father-in-law died a stroke. Being the UST Singers' done why they're Choir of the World again.

Pinoy tenor who made it La Scala...

From page C1

RAJOO Samuel

from choir to head. It is quite hard, especially when you sing Mozart. It requires versatility, sensitivity and appreciation of the language in communicate the little fine simple details that Mozart experts in his compositions. With Puccini and Verdi, you see a singer are given a road map with chords and harmonic structures to guide you mindfully be led music, you are the instrument to follow, you have to sing the phrase, and you must give the conductor a clear indication of your phrases. If not, you'll end up having some problems."

Pleased with Gerodias, Ismail

Espiritu said he was pleased to end with Gerodias. "She is a true artiste and someone to look up to as a singer. The level of artistry and singing on her end is top-notch! I look forward to singing with her more. If it wasn't for her, I will not be debuting here in Manila."

The tenor said he also found pianist Ismail an amazing musician. "He is used to one of a kind, and I don't really have to worry about anything. He supports me very much. He is very flexible, which is very rare to find in a pianist. He is really, really lucky to be performing with them. I am honored to be on stage with the both of them."

Espiritu finished Bachelor of Arts and Master of Music degrees at the University of New Orleans. He has an Artist Diploma in Music from Oberlin College Conservatory of Music.

When he discovered opera, he said he was a fan of Gary Valenciano. As a kid, he said he used to admire Placido Prato.

He said he was a big American footballl fan. He added he liked to drive a lot, put fast on purpose and find his way back. (He recently joined the Ultra Forum.) "I'm currently enjoying driving around Manila. Lots of places to see and discover. And I love traveling!"

After Manila, the tenor will be singing Elvino in Bellini's "La Sonnambula" in Switzerland. He will sing Rachmaninoff's 9th Symphony in Finland, then do Rossini's Messa di Gloria in Hong Kong.

RACHELLE Gerodias

The Aug. 14 Manila debut of tenor Arthur Espiritu is presented by the Philippine Music Foundation and NCCA Music Center. For tickets, call (0908-3134237 or 5573811.

PETA adapts Rabindranath Tagore's play 'The Post Office' into Filipino

By Toni V. De Jesus
Contributor

LOBOC CHildren's choir

The Loboc Children's Choir and the Manila-based Rhyenwan Choir alternate in providing the production a live vocal score

MARTIN de los Santos as the Boy in Film Festival

DITOR ENGood e-mail, SMS, Twitter, Facebook, blogs and other electronic forms of communication, why watch a play titled "Ang Post Office"?

It is the just-opened show by the Philippine Educational Theater Association (Peta) at the Peta Theater Center, adapted from the classic play "The Post Office" by Rabindranath Tagore: the first name is not the Nobel Prize for Literature.

"Ang Post Office" is not really about that office beside the mercado or the old spooky building in Lawton, Manila, where "Dyesebel" supposedly then enveloped itself. Simply described as "a fable play about the death of a child," it explores the value of a child's innocence at a time when everyone else is cynical of other people's intentions.

"It is about a child's purity, joy and sense of hope. It centers on the boy who, an orphan, who, despite his frail sickness, that isolates him from the world, is still a source of strength, whose imagination expands beyond the four corners of his room," explains director Lauro "Lamfo" Lobel.

Abel lives with his uncle, Mang Pedring, who doesn't know what to do with his nephew's illness. The doctor can only give him temporary relief. The play never mentions what kind of sickness Abel has.

Abel looks outside the only window in his room, for a bittersmelled by a cute vendor, a young girl who sells flowers in the morning; a policeman who points to him the post office where the King's messages come from; a guard who eavesdrops every other time it is said Noble the "holy man" who tells him stories about an island paradise where fruits sing all day and the trees bear fruit all year round.

Abel's hope is pinned on the post office, which, according to the policeman, will bring good news from the King. Abel looks forward to the day when the royal postmen would bring him the message he's been waiting for, especially about the arrival of the King himself, to help him find the cure to his sickness.

Favorite play

The staging of Tagore's "The Post Office" was initially thought of 10 years ago by Bobbit. It was Lobel's Indian director-playwright friend Rustom Bharucha who suggested it to him upon seeing the performance of the precociously acclaimed Loboc Children's Choir. Lobel is stage director for the much-awarded choir.

"It was Bobbit's most favorite play and it has children singing and acting on it. He immediately wanted the choir to do the part. We had troubleshoot done in Bicaya, but the change of the local administration in Bohol, where I served as cultural officer, prevented us from pursuing the project. I brought it to Peta almost four or three years ago and, good thing, the theater project is now a reality," he says.

Abel is played by 10-year-old Hunter de los Santos, a "veteran" child actor who has acted in Lino Brocka's "Maynila," as well as in a string of movie and TV soaps.

Playing the adults are theater mainstays led by Bembo Ricio as Mang Pedring and Sudjie Pascua (alternating with Paolo Rodriguez) as Bobbit, the holy man-dorado.

The Loboc Children's Choir and the Manila-based Rhyenwan Choir alternate in providing the production a live vocal score.

Transportation

"Tagore wrote the Nobel in 1913 and wrote "The Post Office" a year later. It was translated into English from the original Bengali text by Devakumar Mukherjee. Since it is set in India about a century ago, Lobel and his creative team transposed it into a contemporary Philippine setting, with Dody Vera doing the translation into Filipino.

Engaging watercolor images drawn by Lilen Suarez and projected on a mural screen shaped like a cloud on top of the stage are part of the set design by Leo Martinez, who also did the minimalist bamboo-topic hut scenery. The lighting is by Jess Jose Villaseñor.

"Ang Post Office" is part of Peta's major productions and may be booked for shows in selected venues on select dates.

The show runs Aug. 6-Sept. 12 at Peta Theater Center, 3 Edward Jones Ave., Maysilo, QC, with 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. shows. Call 4108611, 7355244, 0918-8068852 or 0917-8044428, e-mail petapmp@yahoo.com.

Dagulog at Outerspace

Thomas Dagulog's "Intergalactic Spirits" opens Aug. 11 in Outerspace (1214 Metropolis St. Makati; tel. 4076388; www.outerspace-intelligent.com). The opening features a performance by alternative group "Kalye Orangutan." Dagulog's artworks, mostly acrylic paintings focus on modern-day heroes versus their political personalities, fantasy-type characters and movie stars. Engaging the mind fascists at the University of Santo Tomas.

"SMALAS," by Thomas Dagulog

Mariner Baldonor at Sigeada

Mariner B. Baldonor's "Contemplations," an exhibition of 3 color Sign paintings is opening at Sigeada Gallery (1021 Urquiola St., Sta. Cruz, Manila).

Rillo at Blanc

Rachel Rillo makes her debut in "Dimples" a first personal project that visually her "sensitive, expressive, bold and mysterious." The show, "Dimples with the Peterheads," gathers photographs and sculptures from the last three years, which are unrelated and mysterious only as just individual.

"BONECO," by Rachel Rillo

"KNIGHT," by Ka Lorenzo

The collage, Rillo said has some connection with their short group shows, "Bare Basics," which opened on Aug. 7 at Blanc Pension, The show runs until Aug. 29. Underneath the Floorboards," runs simultaneously with "Lot Postcards and Other Beautiful Stories" by Johnson Baquiro at Silverdare Gallery (29 NMC Bldg. S. 2329 Pasong Tamo Ext., Makati; tel. 8160000, 0917-5823011; www.silverdaregallery.com), and "Mid Pedition Fusion Another Dead Sea Affair" at Ilac Commercial Center Terrace, Michael Cohen, Chris Bugo, Xander Galeria, Adriano Oliveto, Jay Bernal, Robert Medel, Jesse Lumbera, Kaya Cayetenano, Prose Pagaduan, MaAnn Bautista, Jerry Elizondo, Jayson Moreno, Mia Del Black, Pia Hernandez, Ricardo Jimenez, Anne de la Cruz, Frank Epil, Patrick Faro, Boni Balaoro, Jan Tec, Nissi Besico, Jose Pascual, Shereen Gallejo, Salvador Ballesca and Roxanne Jimenez.

Visual Arts

by Nicolette Robles-Alcalde

'Dream Together' at Art Center

"Dream Together" group exhibit features installation of scenes of drawings from comic book illustrations, graffiti, painting, design by artists Bengs, Jo Sae, Ajax Ocampo, Leon Lock, Pinto Sio, Iyan Pantaleon, Karen Ilarde and Rommel Estrellado. It runs until Aug. 15 at SM Art Center (4/F, SM Megamall, Mandaluyong; tel. 6340891).

Cuta at Artes Orientes

Frank Cuta will hold his 6th one-man show "Kaleidoscope 2" in Artes Orientes (2/F, The Head Shops, Serendra, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig; tel. 8556127, 8556128, 8556129). His latest works assign space fragmentation and color layering that complicated spatial reading in a degree that is engaging.

"LASF Pieta," by Frank Cuta

Hizon palette-collection at Bencab Museum

"Through the Painter's Eye," features and limited edition palette-collection series on Aug. 14 in Gallery Indigo of Bencab Museum (Km. 8 Asin Road, Tuba, Benguet; tel. 4074/4445115). Executive Director Corazon Abrigo said, "Each palette is unique."

'Unmounted Boulevard'

Artist-duo's group show "Unmounted Boulevard" exhibit Aug. 13 in Crossbreed Cafe & Deli (Rockwell Mezzanine, Tel. Manila; tel. 3602-8805/906) featuring some 40 artworks scattered in various media. Participating artists include Kris Jan Garcia, Bernard del Mundo, Bert Carlos, Jayne Dorcol, Erick Kilayko, Rey Hermano, Rex Cabarrus, Ted Pagaduan, Jerrel Pacas, Sarah Anne Go, Ramsay Lucero, Jhon Mendoza, Kristine Lopez, Chloe Hart de Guzman, Eric Monterde, Pluto Ardo, Ondoy Domingo, Chad Bautista, Jojo Dominguez, Ben Balcombe.

Quinones at Big & Small

Joel Quinones's latest explorations and observations in Mindoro Big & Small Art Gallery (4/F, SM Megamall, Bldg. A, Mandaluyong; tel. 5602540, 6911, 6920; bigandsmallart@yahoo.com) until Aug. 31.

"FAMILY," by Joel Quinones

Velasco-Golez at 7 Swimpools

Leila Velasco-Golez is holding her 10th one-man show in 7 Swimpools (Don Mariano Bldg., 32 Dela Rosa St., Legaspi Village, Makati; tel. 8187222). Her works are impressionistic in style and are of cityscapes in paper. She is an alumna of the UP College of Fine Arts.

FROM BOOK TO FILM

Clever, ghostly suspense in 'Ghost Writer'

By Jordan Mart-S. De Leon
Contributor

ROMAN POLANSKI mixes products and suspense in his new thriller, "The Ghost Writer," an adaptation of Robert Harris' novel "The Ghost."

The seasoned protagonist, mostly called "ghost writer" (Ewan McGregor), gets a big break in his ghost-writing career when he lands the job of finishing the memoirs of former British Prime Minister Adam Lang (Pierce Brosnan) after the latter's previous ghost writer died in an accident.

However, the downside is, he has to shadow Lang in his seven-level house on an island off the US Eastern seaboard, where Lang's wife Ruth, Olivia Williams) and aide Amelia Bly (Kim Cattrall) are also residents.

Although he figures out what he has to with the uncompleted memoir, he also unearths clues and mysteries that suggest that the previous ghostwriter might have stumbled upon Lang's dark secrets and the connection to the CIA.

To make matters worse, a former member of Lang's cabinet is on the run of committing a war crime—rubberstamping the illegal seizure of suspected terrorists and allowing the CIA to torture them. The writer realizes there is more to Lang's and Ruth Lang's past, and other unknown figures may be at work.

As in the novel, no one feel Lang—with his stint as a British prime minister, his involvement in the Iraq war and the war on terror, and his close relationship with the United States—is an allusion to real-life former British Prime Minister Tony Blair. Arguably the most unsympathetic character in the movie is Lang's wife Ruth, who is portrayed as a cold, calculating woman who is the brains behind her husband's political career.

Unlike other thrillers, the film does not have a lot of action. Instead, it cleverly builds on the suspense using the distinction and silences.

The first half of the film is hypnotic. The gloomy environment, the chilly bike rides through the rain, and the cold attitude of Lang's household engage the senses—similar to the build-up of suspense.

McGregor gives a solid performance. But in the book, the character shows a more humane side as he has a love interest, unlike in the film where her background and friendship aren't explained.

Overall, the film stays true to the novel, although more focus is given on the involvement of the CIA in the book.

Ruben de Jesus and the simple life

By Raissa Imari Santiago
Contributor

THE FIRST thing you notice about Ruben de Jesus' works is their colors. Reds, blues and blacks are rendered in custom and unexpected hues, their pins around light and shadow and emphasis.

But up close, you realize these are pen-and-ink, and drawings. Making "Simplong Rubio" (meaning as the shows, Philippine Heritage Library, Makati Avenue) is not as simple as its title sounds.

De Jesus said he had wanted all along to detail the simple life. Each of the 12 framed artworks—six in blue and black, six in red and black—focuses on a particular occupation in rural life. Each work tries to arouse from oblivion a specific aspect of the simple life that might have been forgotten amid urban progress and development.

A teacher of Visual Communications at the College of Fine Arts in UP Diliman, De Jesus said he was surrounded by the world changes brought by technology. Going for the simple in subject matters and in medium seemed the best path for him to define and convince his art.

So he gives the viewer particular instances of the simple life, where men and women work the farm and children do household chores; where men take care of the chickens and feed the pigs; where children pause their time on the rooftop; and where a man watches a river and rest.

The images of simplicity are complemented by the simplicity of the medium—pen and ink. Shades, texture and depth work together to achieve images that's multi-layered and multi-dimensional.

Of course, the simplicity conceals complexity, especially since the works invoke reminiscence and nostalgia. They are reveries of a vanished world.

Mindanao university press opens Manila shelf

CAGAYAN DE ORO (MindaNews) Press' academic and scholarly publications are now available at Book Sneak at 11/C Bonnie Cousin St., Poblacion one, Cubao, Quezon City.

Based in Capital University in Cagayan de Oro City, CU Press reaches national audience for its more recent titles.

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"Japan Integrated: Tale from a Single Japanese Municipal" by Mariko S. Shuster and Lilian de Is Pelit is a historical fiction on the Tagalanon Volcano. It is a tale of struggle that spans four generations in one district. It is recognized in Filipino Literature documentary.

"Defining Success: Stories of 50 Women Entrepreneurs" is published by Doris Magsaysay Ho and printed by CU Press. It is a documentary of 50 recognized Filipino women leaders in Mindanao. Divided who have found economic empowerment through NGO assistance.

CU Press is a member of the Philippine Association of Scholarly and Academic Publishing and is registered with the National Book Development Board.

CHORAL director Fidel Calalang hoists the Choir of the World trophy from Wales, UK.

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Travails and triumphs of the UST Singers

The 2-time Choir of the World winners were stranded due to the Iceland eruption. They lost their luggage. And a dam broke in Poland

By Arnaldo Ma. Guerrero
Contributor

OTHER European prizes won by the UST Singers, such as the Grand Prize in the 17th Bangor International Choral Festival in North Ireland; the Lady Dorothy Mayer Memorial Trophy and Peace Trophy at the 56th Cork International Choral Festival; and the Grand Prix au Best Festival Choir in the 4th International Musikos Carnet in Sopot, Poland

IT WAS the beginning of the many trials that plagued the University of Santo Tomas Singers, led by Fidel G. Calalang Jr., during their odyssey from Manila to all over Europe in their quest to become—again—Choir of the World.

Some three months ago, as they began their journey, they were stripped in Seoul, South Korea. Their suitcases in behind blew to Sop again and t was non-visibility in European skies.

Their flights were cancelled. Half of the members managed later to proceed to Ireland, while the rest stayed behind.

Some lost their luggage and had to stroke for several hours; there were reactions of different colors. "Forgive us for being so colorful," Calalang lamented their fears.

In Wisnicz, Poland, a dam exploded and the floods were on the scale of Typhoon Ondoy. Mercifully the UST Singers were in the Welsh countryside.

Stress, cancer, death

In Paris, Calalang learned that his father had suffered his fifth stroke. The time, the disciplined choirmaster ran his bearings and crept below the Eiffel Tower, while passersby wondered what was wrong with the foreigner.

Calalang had to rush home. Here, namely his father recovered, and he was able to rejoin the group; in fact, was told they were winning prize after prize. There was another kind of tension, and his sister, while grieving, decided to catch it out with the show once the arrangements were completed.

The rest of the tour unfolded like a blur—studying a new repertoire, learning new and difficult songs,

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LIFESTYLE Arts&Books

Shanghai Expo a showcase of green architecture

World Expo 2010 is education and entertainment at their best (and worst)

THE PUANGPU district in Shanghai has interesting modern structures built in traditional styles, plus the canal, of low-rise alleys, residential spaces are located along the riverfront area

By Fabricano A. Tejano Jr.
Contributor

THEMED "Better City, Better Life," the 2010 World Exposition in Shanghai, China, is a venue for cross-cultural exchanges on green architecture and housing, urban planning, and sustainable development. Held every five years, the Expo runs until October.

With exhibits over 200 countries, which include the Philippines, and international organizations, the 2010 Expo is the most expensive by far as an estimated $58 billion. It is also the largest, covering 528 ha, almost the size of the city of San Juan in Metro Manila.

On June 10-30, with fellow officers and members of the United Architects of the Philippines (UAP), I joined over 300,000 visitors, who flocked Shanghai daily. To date, the 2010 World Expo has already hit over 32 million tourists.

China's treasures

China's $220-million pavilion is the most expensive and one of the most frequented Expo pavilions. Called Crown of the East, the 63-meter Chinese pavilion is the tallest in the Expo and resembles the Yeda Building in Rizeria, Taguig, and Jose Miguel Corporation Building in Ortigas, Pasig City.

The architect of this Communist-red structure is Hu Zhegang, who also worked on the eyesetting and breathtaking venues of the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

An attraction of the pavilion is the massive projection of the famous painting "Along the River during the Qingming Festival," through a combination of 2D and 3D animation. Here, ship life in Nanjing (formerly Kaifeng, Henan Province) is presented on a 128-meter-long scroll showing 1,300 animated characters.

One of China's most prized possessions, the bronze "Chariot and Horse," is also presented and can be seen through a moving walkway enclosed in glass wall. It is presented to be a copy of the personal carriage of the first emperor of the Qin Dynasty who unified China in 220 BC. This sculpture of a chariot drawn by four horses and steered by an armed warrior is a marvel still and 3 meters long.

There is also a discussion of China's latest green technology which includes the use of organic materials, wind and solar power.

The tour culminates with a computer-managed water fountain behind a circular glass portal. The falling water dances and forms into various shapes, figures and even words both in English and Chinese characters.

Green Germany

Architects, engineers and planners will learn and be inspired by Germany's exhibit of green buildings and sustainable designs. Relatively, the German

GERMANY'S "Balancity" pavilion is both a learning and recreational center with its innovative displays on housing, sustainable design, and urban planning.

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We find ways

LONG opening at Germany pavilion

GERMANY's Evolving Building

GERMANY's Federal Environmental Agency

Shanghai Expo a showcase of green architecture

Front page E1

INTERIOR design from Germany

CHINA Pavilion. This Cosmos-themed pavilion houses China's cultural and technological treasures, which include the bronze "Chalice and Horse," a work in green technology, recycled energy

CHINA Treasures

CHINA'S wind-energy display

the pavilions in a day. Queuing time may vary depending on the pavilion. Lining up at the Saudi Arabia pavilion may take as long as 12 hours.

It took me three hours to get in the Germany pavilion, which nearly as long as to enter the Chinese one then.

Also, well-visited pavilions need more double against the elements. Rain shields are expected to come until September.

While queuing in the German pavilion, I witnessed at least three clashes, the last one being a very violent catfight between two women.

Streets of Shanghai

After started as a fishing and textiles town, the city of Shanghai is now an urban tourist destination and home to The Bund, City God Temple, and the shopping area of Pudong. Streets are quite friendly with the modern paved sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and street lighting and fixtures.

One of Shanghai's interesting districts is Huangpu (also known as New Huangpu), an area of renovation. Behind the bustling high-rise commercial buildings are low-rise mixed-use structures.

A little bigger than Mandaluyong City, Huangpu has an area of 12,240 ha, with encouraged districts in old Huangpu and Hongkou.

Various landmarks put beside Huangpu are the Shanghai Museum, People's Square, Shanghai Art Museum, People's Park.

With the concept of low-rock-deep, buildings of two or three stories usually have stores at the lower level, while residential spaces are located above. As modern buildings with Chinese forms and styles, the architecture is quite charming and friendly with its symbolic tiled roof, painted concrete walls, and the conservativeness of modern signages and air conditioning units.

Salut! to the art masters

Text and photos by Dreyer R. Murillo
Contributor

LIFTED it is not easy to follow in the footsteps of those who would be considered masters. There is always the challenge of being measured up to and compared with those who have already set the standards.

In Metro Gallery's "Salut! Homage to the Masters," a group of contemporary artists give it a valiant effort.

Each of the artists divulge inspiration from such names as Degas, Da Vinci and Hidalgo, and...much like a distant cousin, each interpretation more or less stands out on its own unique way.

Emily the most recognizable is Ronald Cortegada's "There Are No Masters in Our Epoch." One look at the work and you can see Marilyn Monroe...Dorian Jesser Hermosura here, as Cortegal would like her to be known...radiant in four quadrants in the Pop Art ways of Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein. But one is left to wonder what's on the third quadrant.

Face of the era

Cortegal says that he chose Monroe as his subject "not only because she was unofficially the face of film and art in that era but mostly because she is a purely reflection of how deeply the consumerist mentality runs then and even now."

EJ Cubangay took a female face from Da Vinci's "Virgin of the Rocks" and made her the subject of his work "Unlocked."

Cubangay muses on how the expression on the girl's face seems to unravel. Upon first viewing, there is a certain dream-like quality to the work, and perhaps because of the artist's sentiment, the viewer's lens becomes all the more 20 years.

Rodjie Dy chose to pay tribute to Eric Fischl and Edward Hopper with her "Girl by the Window." A painting full of contrariness, the work invites the audience to stand behind the subject and try to see what the girl sees beyond the curtains, beyond the blinds.

"I love how Fischl's works have a

SOME of the works on display

A GUEST views the works

wonderful element," Dy says. "The way his works are his owners a silent witness that makes his work so suggestive. Hopper, meanwhile, creates unbalanced environments by using sunscreens and light, giving his works a very ambient and mysterious feel."

Girl for tractor

With "International," artist Lawrence Rosario re-imagines Andres Bonifacio famous painting "Unabalete Wichi".

Saving upon the old-School in the considerable, Rosario admits curiosities have been a recurring theme for him. In his work, Rosario explores Christmas with a motive. For whatever reason, only Rosario knows.

"To know myself is not only my goal in painting, but to life as a whole," Rosario says. "Most of the time, I paint things of my desire and not so distant past. And every time, I discover new things about me. It is also a declaration and interpretation of who I am. When I paint these things, I can assess my drive, opinion as a person, when I was and where I am now."

Other artists in the show include Renato Habulan, Tengo Almario, John Jack Andrea, Jojo Raya, Rhea Gallos, Salvador Chino, Bodz Gonzaga, Grace Corpus, Jeggy Cruz, Ben Balmaceda, Pocket Enciso, Pedro Garcia, Cielo Gonzalo, Vladimir Enrico, Jeanine Anderson, Mac Anderson, Jun Jayko, Jojo Lukmanto, Jimmi Monteclaro, Marvin Diamond, Elmer Cabiling, Rene Gabayeron, Grace Corpus, Robert Ebook, CJ Tuazon and Chazelynn Uy.

The exhibit runs until Aug. 28 at the Gallery is on 4/F Greenbelt 3C, Ayala Ctr., Makati. Manila. Call +632 7268363, +63917 8115890, and +63917 8-ARTRO-8. Email metro.gallery@yahoo.com or metrogallery@hotmail.com for more details.

Saturday Group holds anniversary exhibit at the Shang

"WE AT THE SHANG: An Exhibition of the Saturday Group of Artists" had a successful run at Level 2 of the Grand Atrium of the Shangri-La Plaza recently.

The opening of the exhibit coincided with the celebration of the Saturday Group's 42nd anniversary. The exhibit featured 36 paintings from notable members of the famous artists' group.

Seen at the launch were Saturday Group president Jacob de Leon, Lilo Gutierrez, Soraya Ong, Shelly Montano, Dante Gamgoran, Roel Ghormley, Ernest Dionisio, Hadi Gonzales, Gino-an Ong-de, Emilio Pozas, Jessedyne Bonifacio, Millicent Arbas, Edwin Sanchez, Carlo Dagohoy-an, Rowena Kleyer, Buddy Chang, Sharon Bonanza and Manuel Mabanag Jimenez.

Started in July 1968 as a loose gathering of artists, Saturday Group continues to number famous names in Philippine art, including National Artists Carlos "Botong" Francisco, Napoleon Abueva, Vicente Hizon-cado, Cesar Legaspi, Hernando "Nick" Ocampo, Arturo Luz, Ang Kiukok and Jose Joya.

For inquiries, contact 837 7831 loc. 713 or log on to www.shangrila.

VIC BACHACO, Soraya Ong and Ruben Dimaya

HERMES Magos, Christine Bautista and Gina Lorenzo

NINOY Aquino Sworn in 1992

EDSA Unwarrior Ish. Marcos Cory

Photo exhibit pays homage to Cory and Ninoy

PHOTOGRAPHER-ARTIST Rafael "Boy" Ramos Gargoz Jr. opens today at 6 a.m. an exhibit of photographs, "Homage to Ninoy and Cory," in the lobby of the Quezon City Hall.

The exhibit showcases Gargoz's photographic chronicles of the 1983 funeral of Ninoy Aquino and the 2009 funeral of Cory Aquino.

Leading the ribbon-cutting are President Benigno Aquino, Vice President Jejomar Binay, Speaker Feliciano Belmonte, former senator Heherson Alvarez, Budget Secretary Butch Abad, Mayor Herbert Bautista and Vice Mayor Joy Belmonte.

MARIAN FINDS NEW LOVE

Life has never been so colorful for pretty young actress and gal-of-the-moment Marian Rivera. In fact, using this "key to her dreams" in vibrant yellow, she has unlocked her exhilaration and taken it to the streets to express support for newly proclaimed president Noynoy Aquino. Yes, life has taken on even more exciting turn despite the occasional bumps along showbiz avenue. The reason? A newfound love she finally met head-on: the new Honda BeAT scooter! Sleek, sporty and definitely stylish, the new Honda Beat scooter is designed for women who are on the lookout for a safe and better alternative to jampacked buses, metro rail systems, jeepneys and other forms of public transportation. Powered with a 110 cc engine, the Honda BeAT allows for effortless acceleration to ensure a real smooth and speedy ride. Its small and compact size makes it easy to control and maneuver with every twist and turn. Safety issues? Have no fear! The Honda BeAT scooter is equipped with a Combi Break System, a feature that sets it apart from other scooters. It stops the front and rear brakes simultaneously with the use of the left brake lever only, thus preventing the risk of accidents caused by sudden braking. A Multi-Reflector Headlight with a vibrant graphic design enhances night vision, while a Safety Stand Switch stops the engine automatically to help you avoid accidents when you're parking. Needless to say, wearing the right helmet and knowing everything you need to know about road codes, rules and regulations are also key to your safety. Other features include a V-Matic Transmission for smooth effortless acceleration, exceptional durability and maximum performance in any road condition, and a Mini Utility Box for storing tools and personal items, among others. Indeed, for Marian Rivera, it was "love at first ride" with the new Honda BeAT scooter. With its style, freedom of mobility, safety and speed, going through life has become one smooth and enjoyable ride for her. That said, it's no surprise that Honda BeAT scooter is the newfound love she fondly refers to as her "I.B.F. (BeAT Forever) 'cause we're M.F.E.O. (Made for Each Other)". Honda BeAT scooter—her newfound love. It's your turn to experience it, now!

Moment of truth after Cebu gets back its Main Street

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Step TWO: Map it out

The next important step is mapping out your career path. "Accenture is a people developer! Sophie pointed out. "Aside from numerous skills training programs available, the company assigns each employee a career counselor to help us map our career goals and aspirations."

Sophie makes the most of this opportunity by having monthly meetings with her counselor. They discuss career-related matters, including ways to improve on her performance as well as exploring opportunities to broaden her knowledge and further hone her skills.

Step THREE: Work to make it happen

"Accenture provides the opportunities, but it is up to us to take control of our careers by seizing these opportunities," Sophie says. Sophie works with colleagues to ensure that all the requirements of her clients are met. "Every day is a challenge," Sophie admits, "but that's what makes our work exciting and fulfilling."

"Accenture is a people developer."

"I like the dynamics of a big company," Sophie shares. "What I like about Accenture is that it's very structured and organized. All the information that you need can be accessed through an online portal – whether it's a personnel change or getting access to training. Also, Accenture, being a big company, offers a lot of room for growth."

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SOURCES: google, wikipedia, cebu.gov

THE IDEA of giving back Cebu's Main Street, commendable as it is, must go beyond face-lifting, which is the most obvious and easiest part of the equation to achieve. But the question must be asked: Will it last?

Making sure that the restored Jones Avenue (now Osmeña Boulevard) lasts brings us to the moment of truth.

Renewing or conserving a city neighborhood, individual structure or a landscape would be easier to do if restoration itself was the end goal. All it takes is a simple face-lift.

PRIDE OF PLACE

Segundo E. Villalobos

However, making that face-lift last takes years of hard work and commitment.

There is wisdom, indeed, to the saying about not having to go beyond doing just this and stop.

Conservation itself is hardly easy thing to do. Straightforward conservation projects pose the most professional guidelines that direct and lay out all the variables to be followed, providing a clear technical road map toward the efficient and effective conservation of buildings.

After conservation is completed, what happens next? Here comes the moment of truth.

Keeping up and maintaining restored heritage is a long, complex road in many instances points of process that ensures heritage is maintained in condition good enough for handing over to the next generation.

Hand in hand with beautification and conservation come serious socioeconomic issues.

The few residents and the many office workers who use the avenue fall victim to the stakeholder community that actually controls the sidewalks, which is a large group—hawkers, vendors, jeepney and tricycle drivers.

Adequate legal safeguards

Are their adequate legal provisions and ordinances that establish location restrictions for sidewalk vendors and illegal public transportation terminals; protective legislation for old buildings; design guidelines and requirements for new buildings on the street?

If they don't exist, there shouldn't adequate protection to be studied and legislated?

On the other hand, should these legal provisions and ordinances exist, are stakeholders aware of them?

More importantly, how to establish cooperation between stakeholders and government to ensure the sustainability of a restored Jones Avenue into the future?

The successful conservation projects in the Philippines are stakeholder-based. A good example is the Ayo Dulce-ria of the Philippine Guardians, a severely endangered World Heritage site, where conservation programs progressed only after the local community took over from properties initiated by central government which were not in tune to the true aspirations of the site and the traditional capabilities of the community.

Making Jones Avenue Cebu's Change Happen into a good, and a better good it is, although a Change Happen on Jones Avenue is not, nor will it ever be.

What it could be is to have the feel of the Change Happen, a grand, broad, tree-lined promenade, a linear park of the center of the city with a feel that rises Paris with today's Cebuano lifestyle.

Contemparizing

Are the days of leisurely Jones Avenue paseo over? Should it, and the accompanying trappings of that era, be brought back? If not brought back entirely, how to maintain its historic Jones Avenue aura of elegance while integrating it with contemporary lifestyles?

Mendiola Boulevard in Ayala Boulevard was intended as a quiet, outdoor seaside promenade. It has morphed into its present incarnation which sometimes precariously with amenities like upscale restaurants, activity and game areas, etc. to forget those unsightly illegal structures which have attracted so many locals to the place.

All I know is that Cebu needs to have its Main Street back. I also know that bringing it back means dealing with complex issues—case of avenue swept under the carpet rug for so-long time.

Unless there comes an event, the face-lifting of Jones Avenue will be just another quick-fixing cosmetic procedure.

They might not all look the same but there are many Jones Avenues in the Philippines. The present condition of Cebu's Main Street is not unique. Most of our Main Streets all over the country have fallen on hard times, and there are efforts aimed at revival.

But from trying to make Cebu's Main Street a better place come a few findings and cohort lessons worth sharing with other cities that might find themselves at a similar crossroads.

The moment of truth happens when we realize that beauty cannot be just skin-deep.

E-mail comments to pride.place@gmail.com

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Anne wishes Oyo the best: He was my first love

ABS-CBN Corp.

By Amy Rivera
Contributor

THE MASS EXODUS OF 1990s- managed talents to GMA 7 means only those Gerbs and Jinoh's threesome are still with ABS-CBN. And since Anne's current contract with "Showtime" expires in November, will she be the next to defect?

"I don't know anything about that!" exclaims the bubbly actress-model-host of the launch of her new campaign endorsing Whisper first-time products (the line joined Kim Chiu as ma-ga-ayuda). "All I know is that I'm keeping busy with 'Showtime' and my new telenovela, 'Green Rose.'"

She's similarly non-committal about the reported wedding intentions next year of Bret boyfriend Oyo Boy Sotto to actress Aiko Melendez.

"I don't like the best," Anne says. "He was my first love, you know?" But while Oyo, only slightly older than the 20-year-old Anne, is already settling down, Anne is content to just be dating—three since, spending most nights, Hi-quiet-French nest Kwentuhan!!!

"[Oyo] is really a great guy, but he's not a drama-his person," says Anne. "When we started dating, I made sa effort to not talk about this in public. He's really not the kind who seeks out the spotlight."

No hurry

Anne's in no hurry to walk down the aisle. "There are so many things I want to do. I have to finish furnishing a condo. I want to travel. I want to try a lot of things in my career," she says. "So can do all those things with a husband, yes, but it's still different when you travel with friends and accomplish things on your own."

Meanwhile, she's got her nose to the grindstone with a packed schedule that includes "Showtime" Mondays through Saturdays and "SNL" Sundays. There are also tapings for "Green Rose," where she reunites with Aiko Melendez, last leading women she crossed swords "firsts," and that to the utmost with Julie Gonzalez for the first time. "Julie and Erin are serious actors, and I'm down [on schedule] of the five months of the series' run so it's quite heavy, so I look forward to doing 'Showtime' every day," Anne says. "What people see in 'Showtime' is the real me, no more no less."

5 top movies about greed

LOS ANGELES, California—"Greed, for lack of a better word, is good," Gordon Gekko famously uttered in "Greed is right. Greed works."

Greed stirs one make for memorable films (which themselves will do whatever it takes to have it all. Sometimes they get in over their heads in their schemes, which always makes things juicier. Just like in this week's new release, "Middle Man," inspired by the true story of the origin of Internet porn.

Here are five other movies that would satisfy your desire for more-more-more:

1) "Wall Street" (1987). The original. "Wall Street: Money Never Sleeps," hits theaters next month, featuring Douglas once more as Gekko.
2) "Citizen Kane" (1941).
3) "Margin" (1999).
4) "A Simple Plan" (1998).
5) "Rainbow" (1982). AP

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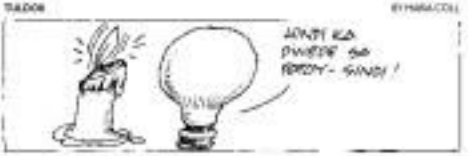

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CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Angelina Jolie is worth her 'Salt'

IF YOU'RE a film buff or anyone-else Indie Filmmaker, you could do worse than watch Angelina Jolie's latest movie, Phillip Noyce's spy thriller, "Salt." Among the best current crop of Hollywood actresses available (cash) counts as ridiculous calling for maximum suspense and visceral impact.

From the film's shocking start to its "twist within a twist" watchdown, the movie's pacing and cinematography effortlessly keep you on the edge of your seat.

VIEWFINDER

Annie C. Jarro

Jolie, from keeping viewers continually in a state of escalating tension and agitation, "Salt" is also a great vehicle for lean and mean Angelina Jolie, in her second and easily better stab at action film machismo ("Lara Croft: Tomb Raider" was a relative walk in the park).

Some female stars admit to "pressure envy" because male action heroes generally make more money by topbilling blockbusters that gross gold. Jolie at the box office: Well, Jolie hasn't stopped at "people-ly" carving out gutsy, don't-up-and-marry-me-a-movie roles, Hollywood's favorite leading-man-maybe-married-or-not-to-be.

What makes "Salt" such a crowd-drawer and guns-killer? It sees the lovely Ms Jolie in a top CIA agent whose gung-control is audibly interrupted by a Russian defector's accusation that she is a brainwashed counter-spy embedded in the United States decades ago, in preparation for the execution of utopia-secret jobs.

The scheme is to cause political havoc by assassinating the Russian president or his heir's on-an official visit to the US.

Penetrating these slick's latest falsely accused, agent Evelyn Salt is forced to run for her life to prove that she's innocent. But, is she? Subsequent events suggest that, in this movie, her and Jolie's most just remain bedfellows, they're as inconsistent as a pair of hitchers-feller in heat.

At the end of agent Salt's long flight both away and towards self-redemption, the film does finally reveal the truth. But, no sooner has the cat been let out of the bag than an even bigger and more elusive feline is released, to dare at our frazzled brains one more time, before the movie finally comes to its mind-boggling conclusion.

Angelina Jolie plays a top CIA agent in "Salt."

'Collateral damage'

Along the way it just only involves death in the "family" of the American president, but also as a threat to the life of the American chief executive.

In addition, there are scores of other victims on both sides of the newly reconstructed Iron Curtain, an even increasing pile of dead bodies that could be counted as part of the movie's character's "collateral damage."

In the matter of all the high-tech carnage, Salt herself survives heaven, then more and dropped-way beyond a fellow's smartest guns from. Yet, some of the plot twists and really does defy gravity, and the movie's ending is not as seriously. Yet they still zip in our guts, become loud ass Jolie shoots them with stunning realism.

But of all, she movie has complex characterization with a vibrant and visual psychological life, the emotional "meh" of which is both unbearable and unavoidable.

As some that best illustrates this is when the husband she loves is shot in front of her shocked eyes, to "test" her feelings. "If she breaks down, the Russians will know that she loves him too much for her to remain loyal to them," she tells her boss. But, in the heat of the moment because of her all-important mission, she can still be trusted.

Still, Jolie's portrayal of Salt's feelings is so psychologically salient that she is able to convince the Russians that she's confident side, while making it also clearly clear to viewers that she's dying deep inside her.

That's her juggling 11 balls in the air while keeping cartwheels and singing the French national anthem backwards—but Jolie is able to pull it off.

Granted, a number of the plot twists in "Salt" are too convoluted and contrive to be believed, but the film as a whole, aided by its exhilarating editing, masterful direction and Jolie's "do or die" portrayal, makes movement of most creepy conspiracies by giving viewers a whack, a whoot—and a whisk of a good time at the flicks.

'Entourage' boys back on track

"ENTOURAGE"

HBO and the rest of his entourage are back to continue their quest to conquer Hollywood in Season 8 of "Entourage," which premieres tonight at 9:30 on ETC.

It follows the journey of Vincent Chase (Adrian Grenier), a wannabe actor who moves from Queens, New York to Los Angeles to pursue his dream of being an A-List star. Joining him on his best friend and manager Eric Gerard Connelly's (Kevin Connolly), half-brother Dramin (Kevin Dillon) and assistant Turtle (Jerry Ferrara). Ashley Moss is awaits superstardom is Sal Gold (Jeremy Piven), his uncompromising but lovable agent.

ELIZY's daughter Angela with son Clyde

Nonstop singing . . .

From page E2

of years than Chino previous.

Chino was Maria"—Rocking Chorales and Anna— joinedly did a song and dance number. The dating did exclaimed, "That's the most expensive production number of all!"

As he was about to blow the candle of his cake shaped like a motorist's favorite, he said in part, "Who'd be the other apple? I think Hugo (his son with Teresa Loyzaga) did."

Birthday cheers, BFF Sydney Mar your look back, and ahead with a big smile in your heart. Here's to your well-lived life of being well-loved. Thanks for being here in my lifetime and sharing my world for the better.

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Amy Poehler, Will Arnett welcome second baby boy

CHEER FACTOR

LOS ANGELES—It's another boy for Amy Poehler and Will Arnett.

A spokesperson for the couple said Boy welcomed son Abel Jenno Arnett Friday morning. Publicist Lewis Kay said Abel weighed 7 pounds, 13 ounces and the whole family is "healthy and resting comfortably."

The two actors are also parents of son Archie Leon in October 2008.

Poehler is up for an Emmy for her leading role on the NBC comedy "Parks and Recreation." Her other credits include "Saturday Night Live" and the movie "Baby Mama."

Arnett is also nominated for an Emmy this year for a guest appearance on "30 Rock." His other credits include "Arrested Development" and the recent films "Semi-Pro" and "Despicable Me." AP

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CESAR Montano and wife Jasmine Cruz link arms with their signature song "Bahid Mga Luha Ang"

Nonstop singing during Buboy's bash

CESAR Montano had an awesome birthday bash at his mom Guillermo on Scout Castor in Quezon City. It's his first birthday since his son Angelo passed away, but no doubt, Angelo was there in spirit.

"I miss Angelo's cooking most for his drawing my pansy," Buboy said. "And I also miss singing a duet with him. We used to sing his love song, 'She's So In, Hary Man Lantong' on my birthday."

As mother Inang celebrating another wonderful year on his 80, Buboy also remembered the joy of having Angelo be a son even if he's on longer around.

Buboy says surrounded by "his friends people in the whole world," as he put it, to ease the pain and somehow make his past complete.

Present at the gathering were his full-sister Soledad and their three adorable daughters, Gemma Cruz, Gina's everything singer and actress, Buboy's kids Bianca and Angelo with her son Cholo, Ejay Alcantara, Boyet Sphynxet, Cholo Rueda-Bonner and her hubby Doug, Noel Cabangon, Alvin Aseron, Shalay Pilares, designer Eric Pineda, US-based dyesebel RD Alba (who's at the helm of Buboy's coral, Miss "Bikram") and other non-showbiz friends.

I texted Buboy "What if Tito Norman & drops by to greet you?" By smiled. "That would be a great birthday surprise."

But Tito Norman was a no-show. It was nonstop singing all night. Buboy and Bianca sang their signature duet, "Bahid Mga Luha Ang?" The birthday boy was proudly crooning the Hermes lyrics and Tina Religion pair

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Dolly Anne Carvajal

CESAR gets to have his cake and eat it, too.

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Pinoy dream team in Sayles' film

Joel Torre assembles the 'best of the best' in front of and behind the camera for 'Amigo'

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

BOHOL—Where they were teenagers in Bohol, Joel Torre and his friend Mario Ostrid used to dream big.

"We'd do stuff like bigtime and imagine: What if we could make a Hollywood movie? We never thought we'd really get to do it," Torre told Inquirer Entertainment on the set of "Amigo" (formerly "Barrio"), a US$6m film shot in the outskirts of Tagbilaran City.

Co-producers

Torre and Ostrid are co-producers on this latest film of Oscar-nominated writer-director John Sayles.

Torre recalled that he and Ostrid were members of Manduca, the Bisaya-based theater troupe led by Nonie Gallaga, who later directed Torre's 1982 acting debut in "Oro, Plata, Mata."

After college, Torre pursued an acting career in Manila. Ostrid migrated to the US where he worked as apprentice editor to Robert de Niro's "Bert n Dorm," and later, as assistant editor to Tony Goldwyn's "A Walk on the Moon" and Hilary Gaines's "I'll Be Home Tomorrow."

Ostrid was also in the editorial team of Sayles' films "Honeydripper," "Silver City" "Lone Star," among others.

Through the years, Ostrid and Torre kept in touch and would cite each other whenever in the news was in the fix.

When Ostrid got married, Torre and Sayles were principal sponsors.

When Sayles introduced to Palawan in 1999, Torre was his assistant in the plane. Throughout the flight, the director regaled him with anecdotes on Philippine history.

Sayles was working on a screenplay on the period after learning how fast-paced it is to make a film here," Torre said.

Torre's job as co-producer on "Amigo" included gathering a "dream team" to lend behind the camera.

Apart from Torre, other Filipino actors like Bembol Roco, Gloria Lacuna, Bio Locsin, Ajanki Obsidian, Arlan Avella, Ionas Salvacion, Marlyn Macias and Pen Medina were cast in "Amigo," which has been shown as an entry to the Sitges Film Festival in Spain.

The crew includes makeup artist Cecille Bione, production designer Roderil Cruz and costume designer Gino Gonzales.

He's hopeful that the film would open new doors for the Philippines. He wants to prove that "It's safe to shoot here and Filipinos are gifted and skilled film workers."

He boasted that Oscar-winning actor Chris Cooper was blown away by the set.

Working with Sayles is both exhilarating and daunting, said Torre.

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TV-film child star tries theater

"WE WOULD tell nobody with the script on his chest," says the mother of child star Martin de los Santos, who at 10 has already acted in an international film ("Mercenaries") with Hollywood stars Gael Garcia Bernal and Michelle Williams.

The proud mother describes her son as a "professional actor" who comes to rehearsals on time every day after his classes.

Although he has appeared in a number of local television shows—"Encantadia," "Love To," "Encantadia," "Sana," "Mga Mata ni Angelita," among others—the young actor admits he is quite anxious to perform live.

"Ang tawag kasi ay hatchet ng TV na pwede mag-cut," he says.

Martin plays the lead role in the Philippine Educational Theater Association's (Peta) adaptation of Rolando Tinio's "The Post Office"—"ang first Office" which was written in poetic verses by Palanca award-winning writer Rody Vera.

Martin plays Abel, a sick young boy who meets peculiar and inspiring characters who give him a taste of hope despite his extended illness.

"It's Martin's first try at live

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3 SALT
4 HATING KAPATID

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4 INCEPTION
5 HATING KAPATID
6 FURRY VENGEANCE

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3 SALT
4 HATING KAPATID

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2 HATING KAPATID
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4 THE LAST AIRBENDER

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1 A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET (NATL)
2 HATING KAPATID
3 SALT

DUMAGUETE

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2 HATING KAPATID
3 ROBIN HOOD

BACOLOD

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3 SALT
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5 INCEPTION
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No kidding: Reality TV . . .

From page E4

vision media training.

Fifteen-year-old Camoding, who cultivated the eighth position, believes the poor do not lack in aspiration unlike The gunbearing high school student received two awards that night—Best Video Director and Best Overall Director.

His winning pitch, "Siloy (Sinong Gawanang Sinong)," shows children as victims of physical abuse and neglect. "I saw it happening in the barangays. This is the reason why the number of street children continues to increase," Camoding said in Filipino.

Camoding said he believes in paying it forward. After the training, he said he would like to empower and steward artists taken by creating on what he learned to his fellow youth.

Lee, another workshop graduate, sees Best Director and Best Independent awards for her video public service announcements "Kapuluan" and "Nina," which tackled child labor and child abuse.

In "Kapuluan," Lee dramatizes how even children in their barangay are denied access to education. "Children are forced into labor by their parents instead of sending them to school. They make their children work so they can earn their way in high school," said the 15-year-old in Filipino. "I want the parents to realize that education is important for the youth. They should not neglect their children."

Their works may be confined in the community for now, but it is certainly a good place to start.

BEST Performer Evelyn Amajen and her mom with Likas Player Sharlita Cleang and Plan Philippines' Basilia Bermejo

TV-film child star . . .

From page E1

drama but he argues watch it like a real pro," says director Gerby Lubrel. "He's very versatile and expressionless, allow and imaginative—easier that fit the role as if Tagore script easily arose it for him."

"Ang Pare Officer" goes onstage weekends at The Pen Theater Center at No. 5 Ipanard Teiter, New Manila, Quezon City. For show dates, call 725-4244 or 0917-8044420.

No kidding: Reality TV in children's eyes

By Cora Lucas

LEGAZPI, SOUTHERN LEYTE—Mondaynight of the Lilosan Cup, dramatic, re-enacted television took a back seat when children aged 9 to 13 went onstage and revelled in silly portrayals of poverty and inhumanity in their very own video productions.

This time, children—who are often on the receiving end of programs not suited for their age—showcased the products of their shows instead.

Amid TV's role in narrowed awareness in the kids on a continuing media illiteracy and production workshop, summed up in tension so complicated in four words: "Make them make media."

Responsible media

Amid TV's chief advocacy is responsible media, especially for TV and those children," Amid TV secretary general Meg Cruz Hubol told the listeners. "We could see that if we are going to make a generation that is responsible in consuming media, we should also make them responsible producers of media."

The 30-second videos that spoke out against the issues of violence and abuse were produced by an ensemble cast made up of the 30 workshop participants. The kids were pulled from marginalized communities by Pilot International, a humanitarian, child-centered non-government organization working in 66 countries.

The media training has fostered creativity, self-expression and teamwork among the kids, who grew from being clueless about media technology to being techno-enthusiasts. The workshop was part of Pilot's advocacy against violence and Amid TV's crusade for responsible ownership and media literacy.

Monday's showcase was the real reality TV shown from a child's perspective. There were stories on child labor, child abuse, poverty, environmental degradation, power shortage.

Some of the works ended on a good note, others on unresolved. It helped that the kids' plight inspired some genre of artistic thought that no one had to run on empty.

"One hundred percent of the ideas [where] the kids' video production are theirs," Hubol said of the photographs and videos that formed a plethora on media night. "We were only there as coordinators, as task masters. We taught them the skills they can learn and they developed their craft."

Using computers, digital cameras and video and sound recorders, the kids—the Young Health Media Greenpeaceans—were able to discover media without being plugged on TV sets. Hooman at first, they adjusted to the tech-to-no-time and developed a fascination over modern technology.

"They've never held a camera but **the moment they started** touching the gadget, they learned it quickly," observed Hubol, who facilitated the training. "I think that's the reason [Being young, they are able to explore."

One-on-one mentoring

The training came in the form of a class workshop with one-on-one mentoring that encouraged the kids to critique themselves and motivation. Since the kids have very short attention span, the trainers had to use the game component to prop them up.

A little goes a long way, Hubol believes, saying the kids' works may be a little "raw" now but they hold so much promise.

Already, the videos of the workshop graduates from Cebu and Davao and Northern Samar have inspired TV execs to know that the first question they asked was, "Were those really done by kids?" The top two networks commanded to find stations for the level works they'd seen.

The Amid TV and Pilot International project took shape three years ago, when the proponents thought of designing a mentoring program to form media literacy that would cover digital photography, camera work, video production, camera setting and basic editing. The idea was to level the playing field—so couldn't the poorest of the poor, who may not touch cellphone, to learn media basics.

Hubol said the next step would be an advanced training program for kids who excelled in the workshop, to be held in Cebu, Manila or Tacloban.

Trainers' training

"It would be kind of a trainers' training so when they go back home, they'll be like big brothers, mentoring those they left behind," he said of the workshop in progress. "They'll be taught new techniques that'll teach them how to handle—camera, how to interview, how to do storyboard materials."

An interesting development, according to the Amid TV executive, is that the kids' environment has caught on with media literacy.

"The children are now able to discuss with listeners and television about such important issues as drug abuse and consumerism," said Hubol, explaining how the videos are being used for deliberation in schools and barangays. "They have become very articulate. They have been able to express themselves using the video."

Nedel Buenavoz, Pilot International area manager in the Visayas, said the workshops have become "venues of participation of children in social transformation" in all 22 municipalities and five provinces in the Visayas where Pilot operates.

"The kids have become active players who convey the message they wish to put across, particularly on issues affecting their lives," said Buenavoz. "We engage the children as public discourse. This is one venue for adults to respect the views of the child."

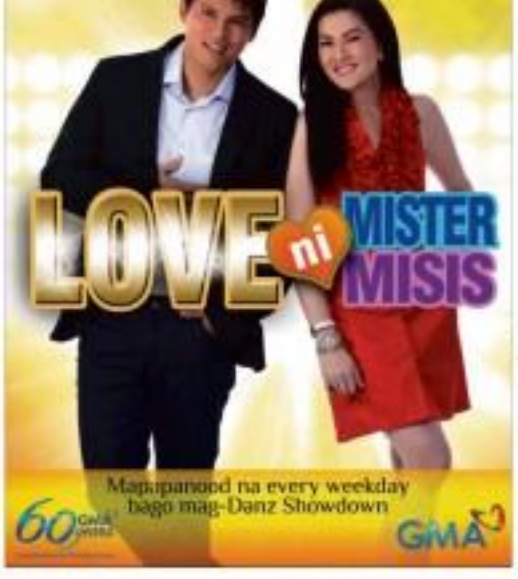
The Department of Education reportedly took notice of Amid TV and Pilot International's efforts and is set to introduce media literacy to the curriculum this year.

Thanks welcome notes for the media literacy graduates, predictably those who received distinctions during awards night. Given medals of honor were Aby Gonzaling, Marigold Mole and Ian Christian Sun Directory; Amber Escobarte, Best Photographer; Shenny Colindo, Best Public Relations; Zhaikang, Best Videographer; and Evelyn Arcipes, Best Performer.

Consoling Bandmates Lee and Michael John Ramos were chosen to go through ad-

LIGHTS! CAMERA! Jerlee Escalante, Ron Gonzaling and Michael John Ramos lead others to use a video camera with expatriate from the press.

The kids were able to discover media without being plugged on the TV sets



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LEARNING

Editor Chelo Bacalla-Ramos
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Sex (mis)education is a game of catch-up

By Linda B. Bolido

AT THE HEIGHT of relief efforts last year following the devastation caused by Tropical Storm "Ondoy," media reports said Hayden Kho was targeted by children in one evacuation center with an impromptu rendition of "Careless Whisper" by Wham.

The song, so people who had seen clips circulated on the Internet knew, was the soundtrack of the controversial "home" movie Kho made of himself with a female partner.

Although they did not own computers, the children were able to easily access the video clips of their sexy idol using their cell phones.

It is the kind of quick and easy access to information that taught modern technology that makes formal instruction on human sexuality and reproductive health imperative, as the science teacher Nilda Dizon of Pamora Elementary School (PES) is convinced.

For Dizon and many other teachers, when it comes to sex and reproductive health, both of which crosscut other issues do not stand discussed in school, students are simply ushering catch-up with mainstream.

Pick up a school teacher doing anything. Dizon was fast on getting all kinds of information from the Internet, most media and other urban debates, sources like their own peers who know no better.

Misinformed

The risk of young people getting their sex education from people just as misinformed or misinformed as they are was already highlighted more than a decade ago in Cairo, Egypt, during the International Conference on Population and Development.

It was also pointed out then that, with significant improvements in health and nutrition, children were physically maturing early while still remaining developmentally and mentally underdeveloped.

With many parents and guardians reluctant to discuss sex issues with their youngsters, the conference stressed the need for a more forward, structured instruction to address children's undeveloped the physical changes they were experiencing and how they should cope with them in ways that would not put at risk their health and life.

Dizon says that, while many young people are not completely clueless about sex and reproduction, it is not a case of knowing the wrong things. Many misconceptions about puberty, fertility and pregnancy exist.

Many older women, for instance, still tell young girls that bathing during menstruation can cause poverty.

When she started the sex education part of the science syllabus for Grades 5 and 6, Dizon recalls, her students giggled and were a bit nervous. "May malisya," she says.

Demystified

But the scientific discussion on demystified the subject. The reproductive organ became just another part of the body that needed as much proper care and attention as the tongue or hand. The teacher says.

Dizon says she breathes the issue in a straightforward manner, divulges no feeling as much the built, no one of cute symbolism or metaphors.

Whether or not adults will admit it, today's children will learn about sex anyway, the person out. "Mahirap si

TRACKING modules for Catholic schools

sinakumo nila. Mamolest din" (They will eventually know and learn.) It was a case to outside the home and school and beyond the control of parents and teachers.

The law and other school rules offer the starting size and expectation openly, clinically, soberly and unsentimentally the secret that lies of adolescence will have "school up," no longer inclined to giggle to hide their embarrassment when expectations and unsure discussed.

Tess of Dizon's former students, Gerald Mark T. Fuentes and Elizabeth A. Asuncion, do not think they are too young to understand issues that some adults consider too much for the children. They say teaching age-objective health is really as possible can help young people develop good habits and make wise right choices.

Fuentes says he knows the lessons are not meant to encourage early sexual activity but should help students stay safe. Asuncion says she is also equipped to tell if what he learns stacks or not in most media and the Internet is wrong.

Asuncion says children have to be taught early so they will be aware of the risks of irresponsible behavior.

Although Dizon teaches elementary students, the Department of Education appears to have decided to focus more on high school students with its "Teen Wellness Program."

Integrated

Assisted by the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), DepEd has come up with sample lesson plans and activities, as well as accompanying teachers' tool kits, for the integration of reproductive health concepts in the mathematics, English, Filipino and music, arts, physical education and health.

The materials that will have to be tested put reproductive health, puberty and adolescence in the broader context of population, development, responsible and wellbeing, and human relations.

They talk about children's rights, self-image and self-esteem, and issues against the use of tobacco, alcohol and drugs, child abuse and sexual abuse. The materials also try to debunk myths (like bathing during menstruation is bad) and reduce to simple terms seemingly complicated ideas.

In a parallel initiative, the University of San Carlos, with the support of the Philippine Center for Population and Development Foundation (PCPD), has come up with "PopDevEd - Population and Development Education," teaching modules for Catholic schools.

Media reports may seem to suggest the entire Catholic community is opposed to any discussion of sexuality in schools, but the modules touch on such topics as responsible parenthood, puberty, dating and number of children, what teens need to know about family planning (against the backdrop of the Church's position), infertility, open discussion in the broader concepts of population, development, marriage and values formation.

The modules, which provide materials for all levels from elementary to college, are designed to be "a guide and supplement" for religious schools teaching sexuality education and development.

PCPD executive director Felicia C. Bolton says the book is a response to the need for "a learning resource that will respect the Catholic faith and reflect its values."

Central to the project, she says, are efforts to reach the young right where or the other respective sensitive integrated, developmental and family planning.

"These modules are aimed at giving teachers access to a collection and well-thought out guide and appropriate reference materials," Bolton adds.

Cagayan de Oro Archbishop Antonio J. Ledesma S.J. says the material should receive proper education "to address the sensitive adequate information and proper guidance on these so serious yet critical topics touching on family and values."

Design students favor yellow and green for daycare makeover

THE PHILIPPINE School of Interior Design (PSID) graduating class of 2010 took a break from conventional for its upcoming annual exhibit to operate the Takumary Shining Stephanos (TSS) in Cainta, Rizal.

TSS is a rehabilitation and training skills center for differently abled persons.

The PSID volunteers replaced dilapidated sections of the ceiling, prepared the wooden walls for repainting and installed a new blackboard. Then a group of 30 PSID student volunteers spent a day repainting the facility's entire.

Bottom gave its full support by providing the guidance of interior design professionals.

Keeping in mind the impact of colors on psychology and perception, the PSID students worked a lot of yellows and green into their designs, using alphabets, animals and animated characters to stir the imagination and interest of the children.

PSID's graduation exhibit this year, "Color Concepts," focuses on the four Cs of design: color, character, circle and care.

Mounted in cooperation with Eastwood City, "Color Concepts" will feature 19 aesthetically designed interiors that are also eco-efficient.

The exhibit runs from Oct. 3 to 31 at Arbesa Building, Eastwood City, Libis, Quezon City.

PSID professor Jacqueline Libarnes, chairperson from animated show s on day-care walls (right)

Class 2010 with Takumary Welfare Rehabilitation teachers, staff members and students

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Member Schools

DLSU-D graduates join Lasallian Volunteers Program

TWO GRADUATES OF AB Community Development, major in Community Psychology, of De la Salle University-Dasmariñas (DLSU-D) were given the rare opportunity to become Lasallian Lay Missionary Volunteers of the Lasallian Volunteers Program (LVP). They are Beatrice Flowers and Rafael Leador Gregorio. Their sense of volunteerism, in further developed during their stay with the Lasallian Community Development Center's (LCDC) Academic Extension of Resources through Voluntary Efforts (AERVE), undeniably endowed the Lasallian core values faith, zeal for service, and communion.

"Through Flowers' and Gregorio's experience in the Immersion program AERVE, the two have been provided with the opportunity to live of service in the poor as they co-implemented various community development activities of LCDC. With their experience, they began to develop a deep sense of mission and commitment to be agents of social transformation. They have chosen a road less traveled by volunteering for LVP.

The send-off ceremony for the seven volunteers was held recently at La Salle Greenhills. The volunteers will be deployed in various poor areas all over the country where there are pressing needs, primarily in the education of children and youth at-risk. Flowers will be program and finance director of Early Childhood Education (Kinder 1 and Kinder 2) in Kaubikan Community located in Bagac, Bataan while Gregorio will be the community director of Alayon Community in Lumpiganon, Bago City. In the last six years, DLSU-D has produced eight volunteers for LVP.

CEU inducts new batch of law students

Central Escolar University School of Law and Jurisprudence (SoLJ) welcomed the Batch 2010 Law students, named Visionary, in an induction ceremony held recently. Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago graced the occasion with an inspirational message for the students. The poster-sized Visionary Batch 2010 is "the youngest" and "have creativity characterized by the irrepressible." Santiago encouraged the students to keep their idealism but at the same time be grounded. She "courage to accommodate failures." CEU Executive vice president Dr. Ricardo T. de Leon was likewise also inducted as the students' honorary godfather. Another highlight of the event was the confidencing ceremony of the Visionary Batch 2010 headed by Justice Adolfo S. Azcuna. Photo of the CEU-SoLJ Photo shows (1st row, from left) Justice Azcuna; (2nd row) Dr. Alice Peter S. Tagalogon (center) with CEU-SoLJ Dean Ricardo T. de Leon; (3rd row) right, CEU-SoLJ Alumni Justice Jesus B. Bellosillo; (7th from right) and the CEU-SoLJ Visionary Batch 2010.

UP Alumni Association Dawag receives award

Tirol P. Ramos Foundation Dean Elenita Dayrit was recently awarded the prestigious 2010 Distinguished Service Award by the UP-AMA National Executive Board during Commencement Exercises at Quezon City Photo shows UPAA Dean president Cherry Bacolod holding the medallion received from MC and Class Anthem by fellow UP alumni during the night with the wife UPAA national vice president Eladio Dungca, UP president Emerlinda Roman and UPAA national president Atty. Manuel Tirol Jr. The Dayrit couple was recognized for its continuing support to UP Medicine.

Shaping young leaders for tomorrow

AIJAMP, a life-long social responsibility (CSR) program, the Ayala Group of Companies has started selecting students from different colleges and universities in the country. The 19th Ayala Young Leaders Congress ran the Literature of the Lady of Fatima University (LFU) Cielo Loreto Multi-Purpose Hall in Valenzuela City recently. Officials from the different organizations attended the seminar to know the qualifications and guidelines to join the AYLC summit in 2011. Guest speakers were Ayala Young Leader 2010 participants Archie Libuser and Elena Alexandrina Poblete of University of the Philippines (UP) and University of Asia and the Pacific, respectively. Of its students listed in the ten criteria and the privileges of joining the host city summit. Invitations were also distributed by the Student Leaders. The delegates are chosen later all over the country. Moreover, student participants will have the chance to listen to lectures by respected government officials and finance the heads of journalism, arts and literature, and civil society. Aside from lectures, chosen participants will have outdoor activities and small workshops. AYLC will be a great opportunity for 20s students to hone their leadership skills as they prepare for a bigger world after graduation. The 19th Ayala Young Leaders Congress will be held Feb. 9-11, 2011.

University of Perpetual Help lauds WCOPA finalist

UNIVERSITY OF Perpetual Help (Las Piñas campus) undersecretary Norman Libunao is the "Cayo" Miranda real son of the Philippine representative in the 1440 Miss World beauty pageant held in the Philippines (MWORLD), held recently in Hollywood, California, USA. Miranda made it to the finals, along with other Filipino beauties who competed in the 10th annual MWORLD. She is the girl with tattoos and plaques in the results event specifically in the following categories: pop, rock, Broadway, rhythm and blues, and open categories for ages 16-17 and ages 18-24. Miranda was one of the 25,000 applicants from 45 countries and then 2500 who auditioned for what is called the official "Talent Olympics". University of Perpetual Help president Anthony Jose Mitchell Tarampi and vice president Alfonso Ferdinand Tarampi express the deepest congratulations for their student. Before she left the country to compete in the WCOPA, Libunao's concert was organized by the UPHSD, in cooperation with Step up Artist Management Center, to raise funds to support Miranda's participation in the WCOPA. Miranda, also a Star Magic Artist, will be back in the country after her singing engagements in the US.

Green initiatives at Cebu International School

AT CEBU International School they are always looking for ways to develop healthy lifestyles and concept of everyday actions towards to some environmental awareness and encourage participation habits. They'll the CIS mission statement is to develop environmentally concerned individuals. Families, students, teachers, and staff members are encouraged to bring in recycled products from home, as well as recycled items that are on campus. A recycling company picks up and recycles tin cans, cardboard, newspapers, magazines, and cardboards. "Recyclists" is part greatly electronically to all CIS community members. For food scraps, Evolved is used, which saves up to 20 percent of the waste going to landfills. In addition, notices and informational items can be sent out to staff members. CIS community members are encouraged to bring in empty milk cartons and juice tetra packs to school. These cartons are made into planters for small transplanted vegetables. When the overgrown seedlings are ready for replanting, they are planted in vegetable plots around Cebu by CIS students. This is part of the 1 Million Bilog project for Cebu project of the Coastal Conservation Education Foundation.

UE Alumni 2010 Grand Homecoming on Sept. 25

THE 2010 BATCH of the last Alumni Homecoming, UEAA Officers invite all UE alumni to come home to their Alma Mater to celebrate the UE Alumni 2010 Grand Homecoming on Saturday, Sept. 25, at the UE Manila's Delpan Main Lobby and Grandstand. Registration starts at 8 a.m. With the theme "Tapa UE . . . Ano Na?", the year's homecoming is the final event in UEA's week-long 68th Foundation anniversary celebrations started from Sept. 19 to 25. This year's homecoming celebrates the reunion of classes 1960 (Diamond), 1985 (Emerald), 1985 (Golden), 1960 (Sapphire), 1960 (Ruby), 1975 (Coral), 1980 (Pearl), and 1985 (Silver). The homecoming is open not only to all UE alumni, but also to the non-graduates, UE officers, faculty members, and employees. The general cost is Php500 per head (Php300 for students). For more information, please call 735-8582; 735-86-10; 735-5471 loc. 310 (UE alumni coordinator Jose Mallanao), 09189899681 (UEAA secretary Del Rosario), 0947-5482143, 313-0747 (UEAA president Rose Diaz), or send e-mail to ueaaoffice@ue.edu.ph, or ueaaoffice@yahoo.com.ph.

Informatics trains new generation of IT professionals

THE NEW age in IT has arrived, and Informatics is encouraging active participation. Informatics has over 200 freshmen enrolled in its new international courses launched this year. Their first year already gives job-enabling skills and lays the foundation for an IT specialization. When these students complete the first two years plus their international experiences, they will be ready for employment. Options in Information Technology specialization vocations outlined by the National Computing Center in BK, and will also earn local certificates for each IT module taken. The excitement really starts on the second year. The students will get to choose their specialization in the next exciting, new generation fields. There are two courses to choose from: biometric systems, business system development, database engineering, digital media technology, forensic computing, gaming and animation technology, information technology, mobile engineering, network and computer security, and software engineering. After completing their second year and taking their international exams, the students will receive an International Advanced Diploma for their chosen major, and move on to IT careers at the most modern and cutting edge industries. Some graduates can design games and applications for computers, others can work in the career for mobile phones. Some can make digital movies, while others can create visual and sound effects for films and commercials. IM Informatics courses they envision, their careers will be exciting, rewarding, and have many opportunities for growth. Enrollment for freshmen and transferees begins in September for the second semester.

Two foreign universities tie up with CLSU

THE RAJAMANGALA University of Technology Srivijaya (RMUTSV), Thailand and the National Taiwan Ocean University, Keelung, Taiwan, established linkage with CLSU on July 19 and April 26, respectively. The signing of the agreement between CLSU and RMUTSV was done in CLSU. The two universities agreed to operation in education and research areas on mutual interest and pursue general forms of cooperation such as students exchange programs, faculty staff members exchanges, cultural exchanges, cooperative degree programs/credential study for post-graduate programs, and exchange of visiting groups. Other forms of cooperation will be developed externally for specific endeavors/activities. On the other hand, the memorandum of understanding agreement between CLSU and National Taiwan Ocean University was executed in Taiwan. It covers student faculty and staff exchange and research collaborations. The CLSU College of Fisheries and the National Taiwan Ocean University College of Life Sciences will be responsible for the implementation of the agreement. Dispatched from the MOU were president Ruben L. Sevilleja, the CLSU president Kevin Pronuevo, the RMUTSV and president Kun-Tien Lee, the National Taiwan Ocean University, Dean Academic Yachpot of the College of Fisheries, who went with president Sevilleja to Taiwan, served as witness. These two universities are the latest to be added to the growing list of international universities and institutions with which CLSU has existing collaboration linkage.

Administrators of Angelicum College attend 6th Icted

SEA, BS, Gentlemen Bautista, DP, rector and president of Angelicum College, together with Myra Dela, academic affairs director, Annalyn Rabulo, research and development head, and Liana Cinquillo, one of the members of the team principal, attended the 6th Icted, a triennial event sponsored by the University of the Philippines College of Education. They joined educators, teacher practitioners, policy makers, school administrators, and other participants interested in the efforts to be updated on global trends and issues tackled by the Icted 2010 plenary speakers and paper presenters. Dr. Josette Biyo, who was the 2008 Icted International Excellence in Teaching Award and the first Filipino to win the prestigious award, gave the keynote address. The conference was held at the Seminon Innotech, Quezon City. The plenary and concurrent sessions of the 6th Icted revolved around the theme "Celebrating Diversity and Transformative Innovations in Teacher Education". Featuring research and best practice papers, ICTED 2010 united not, among other things, the event to come together to celebrate diversity which is defined, for example, the so-called "shared humanity", showed the beauty of different cultures, and opened doors to peaceful coexistence. It also pointed out the need to change education for the better by celebrating transformative innovations.

Marigold Foundation launches 2010 Search for the Top 25 Marketing Management Trainees

DO YOU have what it takes to be among the top 25 Marketing Management Trainees for 2010? Marigold challenges all graduating students who want to pursue careers in marketing, sales and entrepreneurship with this question as it launches the 2010 Search for the Top 25 Marketing Management Trainees of the Philippines. From nearly 1,000 applications every year, Marigold selects the 25 most promising candidates and provides a free-of-charge specialized training program. This is achieved by creating an ideal classroom setting where a dream team of industry movers and shakers teach, mentor and nurture the students throughout a seven-weekend boot camp. This year's distinguished practitioners provide to include Francis Flores of Greenwich, Wilfred Steven of Unilever, Donald Lim of PMFM, Raul Castro of Mr. Care, and Siga Rivera of Johnson and Johnson. Marigold Foundation is a non-profit organization founded in 2000 by Dominic Salvador Jr., Dionne Monsanto-Salvador, Johnson and Johnson, and Jonah Go (name and marketing guru). It has since supported 26 classes every year. Deadline for application is Aug. 16. To submit your applications or learn more about Marigold, visit www.marigold.org.ph or e-mail marigold.foundation@gmail.com.

Parenting books on 'meltdown,' saying no and a whole lot more

IT IS BOOK SALE season at Ayala Alabang's Bookworm, National and Powerbooks, are cutting prices this month on practically all books.

Here are excellent choices for parents, with tips on how to surf-feed round advice.

Meltdowns

What can parents do if their children act as mini-dictators, or throw things or take turns? What if they throw a tantrum at the toy store or in a restaurant? What if they tug at you and scream at the top of their lungs when you go on the door? What if they refuse to go to school? What if they refuse to eat or brush their teeth? What if they won't go to bed?

According to the book "I Beg to Be Misbehaved: How to Handle with Intelligence and Humanity the Behavior of Your 2- to 5-Year Old," even the best parents and their children experience "meltdowns."

Indeed, meltdowns are part of growing up, and can be dealt with lovingly and firmly. Offering handy guidance to our wild-child children, alternative ways to deal with tricky situations, and insightful stories from other parents, the book is a boon for mothers and fathers who want to know how to handle children respect, courtesy and empathy.

The authors are Michelle Nicholson, award-winning filmmaker for the educational series "Kess," and Barbara O'Neal, educational director of Arlington Children's Center. Nicholson has five young children, including triplets, while O'Neal is a mother and grandmother.

Sticky situations

It is not easy being a parent in today's world, especially when you have toddlers and grade schoolers. How can you moderate, or should you even do so, in cases of sibling rivalry? How can you answer children's questions about death, separation and sex? What if your children do not listen to you? What if they misbehave in public and in private? What if they constantly worry about bad things happening? What if they whine, swear or use "bad language"? What if they bully or pick fights with other children?

What appropriate discipline strategies can be used for young kids?

In her book "Just Tell Me What to Say: Sensible Tips and Insight for Perplexed Parents," Betsy Brown Braun, the founder of Parenting Pathways Inc., gives down-to-earth suggestions.

With humor and empathy, Brown gives simple weights on how to talk to children well before and after. Brown, who has been featured in the "New York Times" and "Web Today," cuts through a lot of conflicting parenting advice and gets to the heart of the matter—the development of children.

Saying no

Many parents today find it difficult to deny children anything, even if it a for their own benefit. They mistakenly believe that being a friend to their children is more important than being a mentor, who may have to set limits on behavior.

Research has shown that the inability to say no has led to a culture of "permissiveness" and indulgent parenting, with stubborn entitlement and gratification as the main outcome.

Parents need to be firm at times. But how do they do it?

In his book "Yes, Your Kids of All Ages Need to Hear It and Future Bosses Can Say It," psychologist David Walsh presents tactics and examples for parents to learn to say no to their children when needed.

Backed by solid research, the book also gives teaching anecdotes of parents who relied on their own judgment and boundaries to say no as well as to remember that child-parent conflicts are normal.

What makes the book useful is its developmental nature. Walsh gives suggestions on how to discipline children of different ages, from toddlers and preschoolers, middle schoolers and, finally, teenagers.

The chapter on teenagers is particularly useful. For example, it cites research that says the unlimited nature of a teen's brain, and why, even if they try to act like adults, teenagers often still cannot think like children could when they "acted as ready for all the knowledge they would as they think they can."

The science behind how development sheds light and gives solace to parents who are at their wits' end on how to relate to their children.

Ann Douglas' Sonic University psychologist and professor from Twenge says reading the book "will help today's parents avoid raising the next Generation Me."

Greatness within reach

Consider these questions: Is mediocrity ability a harm of race? The Chinese are supposedly very good in math because their ins, such Chinese.

How about gifted ones to us, no? Mozart was a prodigy because he was born with an ear for music.

How about IQ? "Eugenics dies to latter view." John Isaac of the late father's is often the proud claims of a parent whose one goes round.

But the latest research from fields such as cognitive science, genetics, biology, child development, among others, says the assumptions are wrong. Intelligence (including practice, hard work, good mentors) plays a stronger role than genetics.

David Shenk, in his book "The Genius in All of Us: Why Everything You've Been Told About Genetics, Talent, and IQ Is Wrong," says, "In reverse terms, a mountain of scientific evidence has emerged supporting a completely new paradigm: not talent mainly, but learning mainly; not innate ability, but practice mainly."

Shenk outlines child prodigies and late bloomers, and explains how talent can develop at any stage in life. Best of all, available to Pinoy parents who want to encourage their kids to become achievers, to foster a culture of excellence at any world.

"I Broke for Misbehaved" and "The Genius in All of Us" are available in Powerbooks branches. Just "Tell Me What to Say" and "No" are available in Bestseller's Book Store branches.

E-mail the author at blueb@yahoo.com.

SBC installs new rector-president

HIS EXCELLENCY REV. FR. Alberto Ma. A. Montesa, OSB, was installed recently as the 22nd rector-president of San Beda College Manila.

A memorable celebration at the Abbey church of the Lady of Montserrat presided the investiture rites.

Fr. Manuel V. Pangilinan, chair of SBC Manila board, read the trustees' resolution electing Father Montesa as rector-president for a period of three years starting academic year 2010-2013.

Complementary messages were delivered by former President Fidel V. Ramos, former Chief Justice Reynato S. Puno and Most Rev. Leonardo Medroso, DD, bishop of Tagbilaran City.

Rt. Rev. Damian Mo. R. Marcos, OSB, abbot chancellor, administered the rector-president's oath of office.

Also present included Justice Secretary Leila de Lima, Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin, Manila Mayor Alfredo Lim, former senator Nikki Coseteng, General Lenie Alcaza and founding partner Avelino Cruz of the Angara Abello Concepcion Regala & Cruz Law Offices.

Heads and presidents of various colleges and universities, president Bobbit Ist by alumni president Jesus Cobachan, and faculty members and administrators attended the event.

Left: Pangilinan, Marcoses and Montesa (top); Pabs, Pangilinan, Narvios, Marcoses, Ramos, Medroso and De Lima (above)

London school reps hold meetings

OFFICIAL representatives of the Arts Training College in London, United Kingdom, has set meetings with interested Filipino students.

The colleges invited Filipino students to their main campus to enjoy and study in the United Kingdom. A prospective student can directly enrollment and accommodate with the school. Actual college registration and processing can be done locally.

Acquired, Cambridge-certified, and London-based Arts Training College has been in Tan Kawan Global Bldg. Makati City, to take get the services of a professional recruiting accredited agency.

Arts Training College, with its Philippine representatives Blue Ocean, is currently accepting applications for students and also invites the risk of their falling actions to make.

Call 8556770, 8556776, 8556844, text 0906-1323536 or e-mail info@artstraining.org.uk, arts_training@yahoo.co.uk, www.artstraining.org, www.wwgroup.co.uk.

FOOTNOTES

FUSE ASSEMBLY SPEAKER

Farid Nebbia (center) of Bangkok-based Asian Institute of Technology Multimedia Center was the speaker at the 116th general assembly of Foundation for Upgrading the Standard of Education (FUSE), one of the major beneficiaries of Tan Yan Kee Foundation. After the forum, the speaker had a short discussion with Lorenzo Sy, and FUSE president Salvador H. Escudero III (second from left), Sr. Normanda Cortes-et, Dr. Lucila Tiqui, Dr. Poly Sy and Jenny L. Mamola.

Discounted fees for students at retail meet

THE PHILIPPINE Retailers Association (PRA) is holding the 19th National Retail Conference and Seven Asia Expo (NRCE) Aug. 11-12 at SM Convention Center, Bay Boulevard, Pasay City.

Graduating business, marketing and entrepreneurship students can avail of a special sale of P1,000 to register for the two-day conference. Regular conference sale is P1,995.

The three-hundred rebate to encourage students to develop interest in the retailing industry, PRA Philippines they prefer to continuing the growth of entrepreneurship in the country.

The expo will feature experts on retail innovation, social media, customer behavior and trends, sustainable retailing, wealth management and best practices in human resource management.

Preregistration is required for students.

With the theme "The Roadmap to Retail Growth in the Next Decade," the NRCE is the biggest retail industry event in the country. It is expected that over 600 retailers, chief executive officers and top level executives will attend.

Tony Tan Caktiong, chair of Jollibee and Mentor Prof. is keynote speaker.

Partners in educating the young

THE GMA KAPUSO Foundation, the corporate arm of the GMA network, and Cebu Pacific Air (CEB), the country's largest airline, have partnered in an education program that will reach out to the country's far-flung communities.

Recently, the airline provided free cargo services to the GMA Kapuso Foundation could bring school bags to communities in Negros Occidental and Iloilo.

CEB helped the foundation by bringing the school supplies to the cities of Bacolod-City, Iloilo and Roxas, jump-off points for Negros, Iloilo and Antique provinces' communities.

The school supplies that included schoolbags filled with notebooks, pad papers, pencils, sharpeners, crayons and erasers, reading about 7,203 kilos, were meant to encourage children in remote areas to go to school.

Similar trips to Cebu, Davao and Mindanao to go to school.

Founded in 1986, GMA Kapuso Foundation has been supporting underprivileged Grade One pupils through Unang Hakbang in Kindergarten (UHKG).

Since last year, Cebu Pacific has helped the foundation provide basic school materials to children in near-produced communities to the provinces that needed the most help.

Mel Tiangco, executive vice president and chief operating officer of the foundation, said the partnership provided of lunch of help assistance to four major programs—disaster relief, health, education and values formation.

In June, focus was on education through UHSK. Tiangco said he hoped the assistance would help reduce the dropout rate among children in public schools, which was high, by providing some of the children's needs.

UHSK helps with the support of about individuals and organizations.

Candice Iyog, CEB vice president for marketing and distribution, said the airline strongly believed in the efforts of the GMA Kapuso Foundation to help children and to be partners in the mission of building a brighter future for Filipino children.

Cebu Pacific has used its nationwide domestic network to help the GMA Kapuso Foundation.

Individuals and organizations that want to reach out to underprivileged Filipinos through GMA Kapuso Foundation can make a donation by depositing to the account of GMA Kapuso Foundation Inc.

For Metrobank, the account numbers are 3-098-50834-9 (peso savings) and 2-098-00244-3 (with code BMTC PH SM (dollar savings). For Banco de Oro, the account numbers are 009-00122-89 (peso savings) and 009-0072233 with swift code BNOR PH MM (dollar savings).

Call 9827777 loc. 9093, 9094, or 9095, e-mail philanthropy@gmanetwork.com or visit www.kapusofoundation.com.

For more on CEB projects for the environment and education, visit www.cebupacificair.com.

AETH children are among the recipients of school bags.

San Agustin alumni homecoming Aug. 28

CELEBRATE SAA Apostle Makati celebrates its 40th year with a Grand Alumni Homecoming, "40 at Seventy Five, Highlander in Manila," on Aug. 28, 6 p.m. at 1564 corner Arnaiz Ave. Barangay Village, Makati City.

The event is open headed by Colegio San Agustin Makati Class Pilito. It will feature music, games, and cash and other raffle prizes. The affair costs P1,000 per head.

Alumni for more details and reserve their commitment to get back to their alma mater through the ongoing Colegio San Agustin Makati Buildings Village building project in Bagumbayan, Taguig City, projected for transfer to

Management this month.

The Alumni Association is now headed by Rita Yu Gonzalez as president of CSAA's new alumni board, will also be interested.

Log into to JC Bernal at (0917-8123344 or Carmi Jorge at (0917-8888888 or e-mail agsaa@yahoo.com.

Work-study program in Japan for Filipinos

THE JAPAN Business Club (JBC) and Japan International Education Institute (JEI) have signed an agreement that will allow Filipinos to work in Japan as they study Japanese language and culture. JBC's Toshinori Kanemoto and Jesus Ortiz Cruz signed the agreement. Shortlisted applicants must have at least 12 years of formal education and must pass the qualifying examinations. JBC's Hitomi Kanemoto said the applicants would go to the factories, hospital, medical clinic and other amenities. The candidate is a systematic language education body in Nagoya City, Fukuoka, Japan.

Log on to JEI@JBC.

Seminar on business protocol Sept. 17

THE CENTER for Global Best Practices is conducting a seminar on "Best Practices in Business Protocol" on Sept. 17, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Eden Heritage Hotel, Shaudewang City.

The seminar is being conducted in collaboration with the International Chamber of Commerce.

Based in the of protocol will help people handle any type of individual in all kinds of situations. It is extremely useful in any kind of settings—local or international, in dealing with government or corporate executives, different events and others.

The only one of its kind, the seminar will teach managers and decision-makers, as well as employees, what they need to know in dealing with people.

Seminar speaker is retired Ambassador Jose Alejo Zaide, former chief of protocol of the Department of Foreign Affairs and a 40-year veteran in diplomatic track.

Another speaker is Ray S. Mesina, vice chair of the Center for Global Best Practices, chair of the Philippines-Myanmar Business Council, executive director of the International Chamber of Commerce Philippines, and director for operations of the National Competitiveness Council.

Rafael Claro Alunan, president of PAR Colleges, will discuss protocol for spouses based on her experience as wife of the current ambassador to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and former chief of protocol to Malacañang.

Limited seats are available. For registration, it is required. Early registration must be made by the end of September. Visit the CGBP web site, www.cgbp.org, for full details of the program. Contact program leader Jessica Ogong at 4427349/50 or 09189963693 or e-mail jessica@cgbp.org.

CLASS ACT

CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC

MLC SCHOLARS

UP ON THE ROCK

Middle Crisis (MLC) band celebrates its second anniversary with a fund-raising show at Tourism Bar for its scholars at the University of the Philippines College of Music. The band sets aside a portion of its talent fee for the scholarships. Kirsty Mallos of the UPCM receives the check for P130,000 from members of MLC. In pink, L-R: vocalist/drummer and band guitarist Nonie Mata; rhythm guitarist and vocalist Tatiana Formoso; lead vocalist and bass guitarist Dr. Nick Cua-ue; lead vocalist and percussionist Dr. Ado Sarcino, drummer Lee Barbin; vocalist and rhythm guitarist Ronnie Navarro; keyboardist, vocalist and voice director Ray del Valle; and vocalist and lead guitarist Jonas Marbella. Scholars are (L-R) Tommy Ratigbok on guitar, Wes Lipana on flute, Joan Mackilim on flute, Tagum Valle on trumpet, Jeep Bautista on saxophone, Jose Rizal Lee on vocals, Dean Cleofe on vocals and Jordan Amara on guitar. Middle Crisis band performs every Wednesday at Glut and Breeze on Esmeralda Avenue, Ortigas Center. Call 8237112.

What they've learned

By Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

HUNDREDS OF Asian students converged recently at the Sepang Formula One Circuit in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, not to race cars or watch a motor sport but for a competition on fuel efficiency.

Gas-saving still the main attraction—prototype and urban concept vehicles designed, built and driven by students for the Shell Eco-Marathon (SEM) in Asia.

Engineering students developed and produced vehicles that could travel the most on one liter of fuel.

Team Diwata Shell has conducted SEM research for 25 years in Europe. Then, four ago it was launched in the Americas.

By bringing SEM to Asia, Shell makes it a global educational activity to encourage future engineers to explore and innovate potential solutions to mobility and energy supply challenges, as well as climate change.

The first Asian SEM attracted 61 student teams from 30 universities (Diwata, India, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippines, Singapore and Taiwan).

Filipino Shell Petroleum intern-turned-student-team from Batangas Technological College, Mapua Institute of Technology and University of Asia & the Pacific (UA&P) represented the country.

Steve Sheffield not fully heard their participation in the SEM, students who learned marketing, management and budgeting skills to help defray the cost of their trip.

At Sepang, they re-assembled and prepared their entries pass technical inspection and safety inspection before the qualifying.

Aniche Pardo Pérez, leader of the Filipino team, said, for their car, they used readily available materials, aiming for increased fuel efficiency, safety and cost.

To get corporate sponsors to support them, Rivera said they learned how to market their project, participating in exhibition, designing brochures, making video presentations and using the various media to solicit the help of Shell.

In Sepang, Rivera said, "We realized that this event was not only about the fuel efficiency of our cars. [We] became other students who shared [our] passion for a greener future and more efficient mobility."

He said they found out how developed the other teams were and learned their practical approaches to design.

Although the three Philippine teams were also competing with each other, the Filipino camaraderie spirit of collaboration was evident also in Sepang, Rivera said. The three teams shared tools, spare parts and radio equipment.

"It's sense-ed for them to help us because we have qualified in Sepang," he added. "At the end of it all, we still represented our flag, our country."

UST team leader Tim Mervin Ordillo said, faced with the task of building a fuel-efficient car, he and his crewmates researched what materials, body design and engine modification to use. But they discovered it was impossible to execute their plan because a part of their design required resources and manpower they did not have.

"This is when we learned that it's easier to plan than to execute it," Ordillo said. They finished what needed to be done so they would have time for adjustments in case there play would not work.

Ordillo said they also learned to cope with pressure by focusing on the goal and doing everything to achieve it. "We were put to the test when some parts of our car broke down and had to be repaired, at once. But we can say we became better persons afterwards. We learned to keep on trying and that before you put a point we must play to win. Most important of all, we learned to put our trust in God and believe that He will find a way."

Don Bosco transmissions followed inquiries and he and his team learned the virtues of craftsmanship, industry, servant-leadership and teamwork. They learned how to make the decisions required as members engineers like electronic in developing and fabricating their car and managing the whole project.

"In Sepang, we developed camaraderie with the teams of other countries," Angeles said. "We got a taste of other cultures. We met Malaysians, Singaporeans, Chinese and Taiwanese students. We made many friends. Pakistani friends, who had the same sense of humor I and enthusiasm."

Angeles said they learned how to deal with other people—sponsors, officials, competing teams, media—who shared their interests in the SEM.

Being seen overseas and in the newspapers added pressure, especially because most of the opponents' cars raised eyebrows, as well as the teams' families, schoolmates and friends. Expectations "to pull this off," Angeles said, added to the pressure and they had to learn to handle it.

Although the Philippine team did not win any major prizes, the fact that their cars passed technical and safety tests and qualified for the track runs was a feat in itself. Of the 61 cars brought to Sepang, only 54 qualified and only 29 participants finished, with Filipino placing ninth. Mapua, which achieved 243 kilometers per liter, was first runner-up in the Battery-Assist while Don Bosco, which got 141 km/liter, was awarded a Special Recognition for Safety. The UST car got 198 km on a liter of fuel.

Angeles said, "Learning never stops, as they say. And after the SEM, that is what we plan to do—to never stop learning."

HAPAG team leader Rivera

THE DONBOSCO team headed by Angeles

UST team leader Ordillo

Metrobank Foundation names Outstanding Teachers for 2010

TWO UNIVERSITY professors join eight public school teachers from the elementary and secondary levels as winners in this year's Metrobank Foundation Search for Outstanding Teachers.

On the 20th year of the awards, Hilbay (Catalonia), Calacday (Lingayen) and Edmodiam (Zamboanga Sibugay) produced their first awardees.

The winners in the elementary category are: Grace E. Sabrido of Municipal Sector Elementary School (Calatagan, Quezon); Mildred B. Bolotait of Dasquez City Central Elementary School (Dingalan, Aurora); Graciela A. Rotondo of San Antonio Elementary School (Iligan City); and Nancy B. Segovia of Hilbay Pilot Elementary School (Hilbay, Catalonia).

POLESTAN SALVATUS FUENTES PULAMAYOR AQUINO PENA LABAN BARCINAS QUINARA SISON

For the secondary category, they are Janeth Mendoza Farmers of Hindang Science High School-Eastern Visayas Campus (Hilo, Leyte); Mercedes S. Villanueva of Bukidnon State University-Secondary School Lab (Malaybalay City); Romelita A. Dela of Kabasalan National High School-Kabasalan, Zamboanga Sibugay; and Mercedes J. Labial of Xavier University High School (Cagayan de Oro City).

Dr. Rosario Cortina L. Cuevas of the University of the Philippines-Diliman and Dr. Fernando C. Siapno of De La Salle University are the awardees for the higher education category.

The winners were selected from 456 nominees from various public and private educational institutions in the Philippines. Selected from these nominees were 40 regional finalists, from among which 20 national finalists were shortlisted.

The national finalists then faced the final board of judges for the year's search co-chaired by Sen. Juan Miguel F. Zubiri and Supreme Court Associate Justice Antonio Eduardo B. Nachura. Those who also served as judges were: Civil Service Commission (CSC) chair Francisco T. Duque III, Ateneo de Manila University President Bro. Fr. Antonio Moleta. A. Moreman, and Shell Companies in the Philippines country chair Edgar O. Chua.

This year's outstanding teachers will be conferred gold medallions by President Benigno Simeon C. Aquino III in Malacañang. They will also be presented with plaques and cash amounting to P300,000 each during the formal awarding ceremonies at Metrobank Plaza in Makati to highlight Metrobank's 40th anniversary celebration on Sept. 3.

The year's winners will join the ranks of 200 outstanding teachers who have been honored by Metrobank since 1981. They automatically become members of the Network of Outstanding Teachers and Educators or Bond, an honor society of outstanding teachers committed to nurturing a culture of excellence and service among educators through professional development, publications, research, and advocacy in active partnership with government and non-government organizations.